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LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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13

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"The Riders of Petersham"

A VIGOROUS YET TENDER LOVE TALE OF THE SOUTH-
LAND, CROWDED WITH PICTURESQUE AND
DRAMATIC SITUATIONS

By RUPERT SARGENT HOLLAND

Author of "The Man in the Tower," etc.

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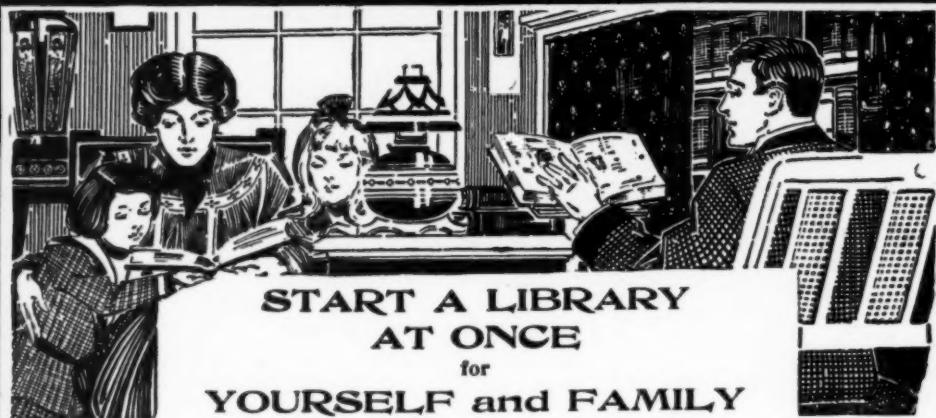
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THE RIDERS OF PETERSHAM

BY

RUPERT SARGENT HOLLAND

Author of "The Man in the Tower," "A Knight-Errant in Broadway," etc.

I.

CERTAIN facts are stamped indelibly on one's mind, so that no lapse of time can blur their outlines. I shall probably never outgrow the recollection of my entry into the little Southern town of Petersham, a village which had been my grandfather's home, and of which my mother had never tired of telling me. I had been born there, and have always thought of myself as in reality a Southerner.

At last I found myself actually hastening down the wide, maple-shaded avenue that ran from end to end of Petersham, bordered on either hand by the stately, high-pillared mansions of the town's socially elect. Such a house my grandfather's had been, and such a one I now found to be that of my uncle, Junius Brutus Coke.

It was May of my twenty-first year. I had left my uncle Elijah Pegram, last of a line of Marblehead mariners, in that little Massachusetts seaport, and had journeyed south to seek my fortune and certain ancestral deeds. Uncle Elijah was my mother's brother, and had never seen Mr. Junius Brutus Coke, although he had often heard of him. We knew him to be a man of position and property—a lawyer, a bachelor, and a connoisseur in books. My uncle Pegram had cautioned me not to be too familiar with him.

"To judge from his name," said he, "he must be a monyment of

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dignity. My only hope, Richard boy, is that he ain't as cold as he sounds."

I had directions as to which was Uncle Junius's house. When I reached the corner opposite the Methodist church, I turned, and, pushing open a little iron gate, went up the path that led to the high steps of the porticoed mansion. The grass and trees on either side the path were very green; a marble stag stood on a lofty pedestal near on the right, and a Venus, looking as if she had never known a bath, reclined full length in the distance to the left. I went up the steps and rang the door-bell. My ring was answered by an elderly colored man who seemed to know me by instinct.

"Mr. Richard, suh," said he, his voice scarcely rising in interrogation. "Mr. Coke is waitin' for you in the parlor."

I gave him my hat and bag, and crossed a slippery, shiny floor. I entered the room on my left, and found a tall, slender gentleman waiting for me. Instinctively I thought of a picture I had once seen of Henry Clay speaking in Congress. This gentleman wore a black frock coat, with a high, standing collar and a black velvet cravat. His hair was gray and rose in a sort of tuft over his high forehead. His eyes were piercing black; his nose a Roman aquiline; his lips clean-shaven and firmly compressed. He looked every inch the gentleman, the lawyer, the orator. Even his arm and hand, as he extended them toward me in greeting, formed part of a very impressive picture.

"Richard," said he, giving me a warm grasp of the hand, "my brother's son, welcome to Petersham. I received your letter in due course of post, and had a room prepared for you. I hope your stay will be a long and pleasant one."

"Thanks, Uncle," said I, both pleased and stirred at the dignity of the man of the house, and indeed of all I had yet seen of Petersham. "It seems a very pleasant place—quite different from Marblehead."

Mr. Coke smiled, or, rather, his eyes did and two little lines on the sides of his mouth.

"Quite different," he agreed. "As different, I dare say, as I am from your uncle Elijah Pegram."

It was my turn to be amused; for two men possibly to be more dissimilar than these two of my uncles, I doubted.

"Pompey will show you your room," said my uncle. "We have supper at half past six."

I felt that the audience was at an end. Following the old servant's lead, I crossed the long, cool hall, climbed the broad stairway, and turned down a corridor that led to a wing slightly removed from the central part of the house. I was shown into my bedroom. It was of Southern largeness—the floor covered with straw mattings, the windows screened with green, slatted shades, a large, four-posted bed towering

in one corner. Pompey expeditiously unpacked my bag, and my clothes were laid out ready for wear. I had travelled far, and was tired. The delightful coolness of the room, and the view of a little garden which I caught from the window, gave me a pleasant sense of rest. I prepared to like the home of my ancestors.

The formality of our supper-table, set for only the two of us, and waited upon by the all-useful Pompey, soon relaxed. Mr. Coke questioned me about my life, about my uncle, about my journey. I had had but one adventure out of the common on my way to Petersham, and I soon told him that.

"I rode the last stage of the journey, you know," said I, "and sent my bag on by train. When I came to the top of a hill, a mile or two out of the town, I found a man lying in the road. His eyes were shut and his face was white as a sheet. I got off my horse and went over to shake him. It was several minutes before I could bring him to. Then he asked for whiskey, and as I had a little in my flask, I poured some down his throat.

"'You hain't seen a great raw-boned white devil hereabouts?' said he.

"I told him no. He smiled, and said it was a horse he had been riding.

"'He threw me off, and if it had n't been for you, I reckon I'd have gone to kingdom come.'

"I got the man on his feet in time, and persuaded him to ride behind me into town. He seemed a very pleasant fellow as soon as he forgot his bumps. He was tall and very thin, with scraggly hair and a solemn face. He was very grateful, and said if I ever got into trouble, to let him know, and he'd try to help me out. He said he'd heard of you, and knew you were a fine gentleman. That's about all, except that he did n't ride into town with me, but slipped off before we reached the houses. I left the horse at a livery-stable near the railroad station, got my bag, and walked here."

"What was the man's name?" asked my uncle.

"Jerry Dolliver. Do you know him?"

Mr. Coke smiled and nodded. "Slightly." He seemed to consider; then, "He's rather a ne'er-do-well," he added. "I hardly think you will care to continue his acquaintance."

"That may be," said I; "but I must say I liked his looks."

"Looks are very deceptive," said my uncle, with the slightest note of rigidity in his voice.

Supper over, we went out on the porch, and sat under the high roof, smoking long, fragrant cigars. My uncle had a pleasant taste for conversation. I realized that here was a man from whose words I was likely to learn much. The longer I listened to him, the more respect

I had for his judgment. It seemed that other men held him in similar estimation. We had not been talking for over a quarter-hour when the gate at the end of the path opened and a stout, red-faced man came up toward us.

"Good evenin', Junius," he exclaimed as he toiled up the steps.

"Good evening, Marcus," said my uncle. He waved his hand towards me. "Mr. Kellogg, my nephew Richard."

The stout man shook hands, and then fell into, rather than sat down in, a wicker chair which stood beside me. He held a crumpled newspaper in his hand.

"That man Burney's makin' trouble again," said he, rapping the newspaper viciously. "This week's *Clarion* is full of — lies."

My uncle made no answer.

"What's to be done about it, Junius?" said Mr. Kellogg. "The first thing we know, we'll have civil war on our hands."

My attention was called from his words to the garden gate. It had opened and latched, and another man was coming up the path. He climbed the steps and swept the three of us a low bow with his broad felt hat. He was rather a striking figure—tall and dark, with bright black eyes.

"Evenin', gentlemen," said he, and held out his hand to me. "Heard you came into Petersham, Mr. Richard Coke," said he. "Proud to meet the nephew of your uncle." He leaned against one of the pillars of the porch. "Have you heard, Junius, of this latest performance of Burney's? Seems to me high time the leadin' citizens gave him a piece o' their mind."

"That's what I think, too," put in Mr. Kellogg. "Suppose, Junius, you call a meetin' to consider the matter."

Mr. Coke knocked the ashes judiciously from his cigar. "If you let a dog bark till he's tired, he'll stop himself," he remarked.

"And in the meantime," said Kellogg, "what'll become of our reputations?"

"That's the trouble," said the man who leaned against the pillar. "Burney's makin' the people believe his lies. I heard some men discussin' the matter down at the hotel."

I thought my uncle looked somewhat annoyed. A moment later he clapped his hands for Pompey. When the old servant came, he told him to bring the gentlemen some rye and water. But the digression was only temporary; for no sooner had the glasses been filled and the two callers drunk my health, than a third man made his appearance on the porch. He was even more excited than the other two had been.

"Tell you what it is," said he, "if we can't stop the *Clarion* any other way, I'll go out to Happy Valley and gag the editor myself. He's draggin' the name of Petersham in the dust."

Mr. Coke held up his hand as though invoking peace. "No violence, I beg of you, gentlemen," said he. "The wise man reaches his ends by peaceful methods. Let us try diplomacy first. But now," he continued, "let us talk of more pleasant matters. I would n't have my nephew gain the impression that this town is an evil place."

"No, indeed, Uncle," said I. "I'm sure it's one of the most law-abiding in the world."

I thought the man with his back to the pillar started to laugh, but checked himself. I wondered what amused him. Soon after, the three visitors left, and my uncle and I were free to watch the moon rise above the great maples in the main street.

"Who is this man Burney," I asked, after a time, "and what is the *Clarion*?"

Mr. Coke settled himself back in his chair.

"Burney, my dear nephew, is a stranger—Kentuckian, I believe—who came among us about a year ago, and has seen fit to find fault with us ever since. He built him a house and a printing-shop out of town, in a place called Happy Valley, and there he issues a paper called the *Clarion*. I know only too well that Petersham is n't perfect, but if I were to believe all the infamous deeds he lays to the town's credit, I should have moved out long ago."

"And what are these crimes, Uncle?" I asked.

"Perhaps a score of petty things, but chief of all what he chooses to term 'moonshining.' He insists that the government laws are broken regularly by some of the leading citizens of Petersham, and that, starting with an illegal liquor distillery somewhere in the hills hereabouts, these men have spread a vicious influence through all the immediate country. He does n't mince his words. In my opinion he's simply a fanatic."

I considered my uncle's words. They seemed admirably thought out and well chosen—the statements of a man who would have been an ornament to any bench or bar.

"Suppose, Uncle," said I, "that this man Burney might possibly be right?"

Mr. Coke laughed—not genially, but rather judicially, as if he were trying to be fair to me as well as to Petersham. "You have n't told me your plans," said he, changing the subject.

I clasped my knees in my hands and looked thoughtfully up through the tree-tops at the moon.

"I should like to stay with you a little while, at least, Uncle," said I. "I should like to see my father's papers, and learn something about the property he left me. I had often thought that I might perhaps begin to study law."

"Ah, yes," agreed Mr. Coke. "I shall be glad to have a young

man about the house. I cannot yet tell whether you are suited to the law or not. As for your father's papers, we must investigate them. It will take a little time to straighten out those matters. Meanwhile, consider the house your own. I will tell Pompey to get you a young negro for a body-servant. There is a good saddle-horse in the stable for your use. Please do not hesitate to come to me at any time."

To tell the truth, I was more than satisfied. There was a certain indescribable romance about this first evening in my grandfather's house—the people, the streets, the mansions, even the trees, were more picturesque than I had dreamed them. Even the word "moonshining," casually dropped from my uncle's lips, had sent a delightful thrill through my veins.

I looked up from my dreaming. Mr. Coke sat with his fingers carefully pointed before him. He had finished his cigar, and his fine head, with its lofty brow and gray, curling hair, drooped slightly forward.

"How far is Happy Valley out of Petersham, Uncle?" said I.

He started, as if I had broken in on his chain of thought. "A matter of five miles or so. Why do you ask?"

"I was thinking of riding over to see this Burney."

"What would be the good of that?" said Mr. Coke.

"He rather interests me. I'd like to see him at close range."

My uncle thought the matter over for a few moments. "I can see no harm in that, Richard," he finally concluded. "You shall ride over in the morning and take him a message from me, or, rather, counsel by word of mouth. Advise him to have more care of his tongue, or there may be trouble."

The clock in the tower of the Methodist church across the way boomed eleven strokes. Mr. Coke rose to his feet.

"Time you went to bed, Richard boy," said he. "You must be weary after your long journey. Good-night and pleasant dreams."

He made me a courteous bow, and I returned it with due formality. I had been weary when I reached the house, but was so no longer. I was too much interested in the men and things about me.

My uncle went into the house, and I followed him. Pompey lighted up the stairs to the landing, where our paths separated. My uncle turned to his rooms on the left, I to the wing on the right. I found a gentle breeze blowing the candles on my mantel. I leaned from the window-sill and inhaled the soft fragrance of the roses and mignonette in the garden below. I watched the moon slowly sail beyond the trees, throwing them into a silver glory. It was some time before I could draw in my head and prepare to sleep. I was delighted with the soft brilliance of the summer night, with the quaint little town, so different from any I had known, and with the stately, majestic figure of

my uncle Junius. The curtains on the four-posted bed flapped gently about my ears. I am quite sure that in riding south to my old home I had ridden into a region of romance.

II.

I AWOKE to find the sun pouring into my room.

I lay some time in bed thinking, indulging in the luxury of letting my eyes roam about the strange room, and fancying how it should gradually come to seem really my own. I decided that I wanted to hunt up Jerry as early as I could. He had told me in rather a shamefaced way that he was usually to be found at the Bluebell Tavern, and that if he were not there, its proprietor would surely tell me where he was. Then I remembered Happy Valley. Happy Valley! The name stood out before me like a picture. Even before I found Jerry, I would go in search of John Burney and his quaint-named home.

Uncle Elijah had been a strict disciplinarian—doubtless the result of his long seafaring life. My uncle Junius seemed quite otherwise. When I had lain in bed until I was tired of it, I concluded that no one would come to wake me. I put out my hand and pulled the bell-rope, which hung down close beside me. In a moment a young colored boy appeared at the door. He announced that he was named Sam, that he was my servant, and asked what I would have. I sent him for hot water.

I dressed leisurely, stopping now and then to look out of the window at the garden, which was larger than I had supposed the night before, and which boasted a great variety of Southern flowers planted in circular rows which centred about a small arbor. The roof of the bay-window on the floor below came just beneath my window, and I saw one would scarcely need to be an athlete to jump from the roof to the ground.

I breakfasted alone, still waited on by Sam. I asked for my uncle, and was told that he had already gone to his office in a small building next the Court House. Forthwith I determined to saddle a horse and ride out to Happy Valley.

The blue waves as they rolled in about Marblehead Neck and filled the Bay were certainly very lovely on a fine spring morning, but even more lovely the rolling country about Petersham seemed to me. The town itself was much like other Southern hamlets that had grown very gradually through the past hundred years. The houses, built with a certain dignity—comfortable, quiet, with wide porches and fine lawns—had acquired a certain mellowness in time. I rode down the main street and at about a mile from my uncle's house came into the country. I had asked my way from Sam, and knew that I must ride almost

due west, following the high-road that bored through the hills. Beyond Petersham came gently rolling meadows, and near the road ran the river, here only a mild, gentle stream, which one could easily ford with the aid of occasional stepping-stones, but which grew wilder and broader as it ran west.

Gradually the grazing land rose higher, sloping up to a chain of hills which formed a semicircle in the distance. The hills nearer the road were low and green, but those in the farther arcs of the circle were higher and seemed to have been used for quarries. A bridge crossed the river to the left, and a road wound about the base of the hills, evidently used by men whose business took them to the more distant and wilder regions.

Half an hour brought me to the circling hills. The road found a gap in them, and allowed me to pass through. Here the river widened and deepened, and became of a very good size. The banks were higher, in places quite precipitous, and lined with pines and broken under-brush. I realized that before one could reach Happy Valley one had to travel through a land of little promise.

My horse was fresh, my spirits high. I pushed on through perhaps a mile of this rugged country, and then found another chain of hills, and beyond them pleasant meadows. The river swung to the left, bearing south now with rapids and frequent jagged rocks in its course, bending back into that wilder country where, I presumed, the quarries lay. The high-road, bearing in an opposite direction, crossed through the meadows and soon brought me into a little bowl among the hills, which I knew must be the place I sought. A peace and quiet hovered about it, and a score of white farm-houses spread themselves contentedly before my eyes. It seemed a strange place for a turbulent man like Burney to choose to pitch his tent in.

There were no regular streets in Happy Valley. I stopped to ask an elderly man who was weeding a garden-patch where Mr. Burney lived. He bade me ride straight on until I should come to a low, rambling house on the right, bearing the sign "*The Clarion*." I found the place without any difficulty, fastened my horse to a tree, and advanced to the door. I knocked and waited. After a few moments the door was opened by a young man. Even at that first meeting I was struck by the peculiar pallor of his face and the uneasy, inquiring look about his eyes.

"What do you want?" he demanded, as if naturally suspicious of all strangers.

"I should like to see Mr. Burney. Is he at home?"

"Wait," said the young man, and, almost shutting the door in my face, he turned away.

He was soon back again, and told me to come in. He led me

through a small hall, back across a little open court, and into a long, low outbuilding, which proved to be the printing-office. A large press stood at one side of the room; a long table, littered with papers, ink and glue pots, shears and other printers' implements, ran the length of the other wall. At the farther end was a roll-top desk, and there sat the man whom I wanted. He rose as I entered, and came towards me.

"I am John Burney," said he. "What can I do for you?"

He was rather older than I had thought to find him. His hair was quite gray; his beard, which was full and somewhat straggling, equally gray. He was heavily built and his head was inclined to bow upon his shoulders. I could see he had physical strength to match his mental determination.

"My name is Coke," said I, "Richard Coke. I landed in Petersham only last night, and I'm staying with my uncle, Mr. Junius Brutus Coke. What I heard of you woke my interest. It seems the last copy of your paper stirred up the town."

Mr. Burney smiled. "Good!" said he. "I hope you take my view of the matter."

"I really know nothing about it," I confessed. "It seems you think some men there a bad lot—some of them moonshiners."

"Exactly, Mr. Coke; so I do." He motioned me toward his desk. "Won't you sit down? I have to correct one paper, and then I shall be glad to tell you anything you want to know."

He went back to the desk, and I took a chair beside him. The young man, who had stood staring and listening to our conversation, began to set type.

Mr. Burney interested me. His eyes, which were deep-set under heavy, bushy brows, were of a peculiar gray-blue, and lighted occasionally in a manner which showed me that they might at any moment blaze forth in the full fury of a fanatic. His clothing was neat but heavy. A corduroy jacket bound with a belt of the same material, and thick homespun trousers, stuffed into boots reaching up to his knees, seemed to bespeak the farmer or frontiersman rather than the editor. The more I watched him, the more convinced I became that he was built for a leader of men, and that it would be very easy to yield oneself absolutely to his dominant spirit.

While Mr. Burney was reading the proof the young man brought him some question, and as he bent over the desk I found his curious eyes casting an almost startled glance at me before they settled on his master. I did not like this young man. I thought I had never seen such an ungainly person, such a scarecrow figure, eyes so furtive, a manner so embarrassed and yet crafty at one and the same time. He was apparently as loosely jointed as one of those dolls you work on a

string, and his clothes had prodigiously shrunk, for his trousers scarcely came to the tops of his shoes, and the arms of his coat disclosed at least three inches of wrist.

When he had answered his assistant's questions, the editor of the *Clarion* looked up at me.

"Mr. Coke, this is my friend, Elmer Simmons. An invaluable worker. You ought to know each other. I hope we shall see something of you, and that you may aid in the good work in Petersham."

I held out my hand to Simmons, and he, after a second's hesitation, gave me his hand. There was no warmth in his clasp, and I was glad to let his hand drop.

The assistant went back to his table of type. Mr. Burney faced towards me, and the fire of his eyes began slowly to blaze. He gave me a curious feeling, because, before he had said a single word, I could see that his thoughts were far afield, and that he was marshalling them as one might an army.

"Mr. Coke," he blurted out suddenly, "there is rottenness in the state of Denmark, and our country must be made over again before she will be worthy to take her place among her sister nations. I came to Petersham thinking to find it a pleasant community, where I might buy a piece of land and cultivate it. Instead, I found that the leading men of the place and of the country round-about are nothing but a band of plunderers, importing voters to suit their needs, holding all the offices and power among themselves, growing rich by making whiskey illegally, and frightening every one who utters a word of protest. I could not till my farm in peace. The call to battle rang too loudly in my ears. I determined to have my say, and so I started this paper. Its sole object is to tell the people the truth, and in doing so I don't care what snake is scotched. Petersham must be cleansed before it is fit to call itself the home of decent men and women."

His voice was low and deep, his manner self-contained, but his eyes had fairly blazed at me from under his brows.

"If what you say be true, Mr. Burney," said I, "no one could have undertaken a finer work. I must admit, though, that the little I have seen of the town has impressed me most favorably. It seems to me a very respectable place."

"Sham, all sham!" said Burney. "Those fine, old-fashioned houses hold a band of robbers. Only the lower classes of the people are really respectable, and they have never had a chance to speak their minds. I intend they shall have that chance."

"And suppose there should be trouble, violence, bloodshed?" I suggested.

"I don't care," said Burney. "The Lord is on our side."

I felt that now I understood the situation fairly well, and that

there was no use in argument with this man. Words would be as much wasted as pebbles thrown against a mighty cliff.

I rose. "Thank you very much, Mr. Burney, for explaining your purpose to me. If the facts are as you say, I wish you all success."

He held out his hand to me, and his clasp was strong as a bear's. I felt that if I met him often, I might become his slave.

"Come over to see us whenever you can, Mr. Coke," said he. "There's more hope to be found in the young than in the old. I need all the friends I can find in Petersham."

I smiled, thanked him again, nodded to Simmons, who looked up from his work, and turned to the door. Even as I did so a girl entered the room, and, seeing me, stopped with some surprise.

"My daughter Emily, Mr. Coke," said Burney.

The girl gave me a little nod, and I, bowing, passed her and went out of the door. I crossed the little court, went through the main hall of the house, and came out in front. My horse was standing patiently. I unfastened the hitching-strap and was about to mount when I heard a voice behind me. I turned around. It was Miss Burney's voice.

"May I have a word with you, Mr. Coke?" she said. "If you don't mind, let's walk a short way down the road."

She seemed a little disturbed, and I was only too glad to grant her request. I threw the horse's bridle over my arm, and led him along, with the girl on my other side.

"Do you think," she said, after a moment, "there's going to be trouble?"

The abruptness of the question surprised me. I glanced at her before I answered. She had a quaint charm of her own. She was not very tall, and was quite slender, with red-brown hair fastened in a loose knot. She wore a dark blue linen dress, with the sleeves rolled up above her elbows, as if she had been working in the kitchen.

"Trouble?" I said. "What sort of trouble do you mean, Miss Burney?"

She looked at me, and I saw a certain alarm in her brown eyes. "Oh!" she said, "I don't know what I mean; but I do know that father's making lots of enemies. I know he's doing what's right and what he ought to do, but when I see some of those rough men in Petersham, and hear what they're saying about him, I'm terribly afraid. They've sent him warnings before now, the last telling him he must stop printing his paper, and threatening to tar and feather him, and all sorts of horrible things. He only laughs, and I try to laugh, too, but sometimes I'm so scared that I can't sleep, or eat, or do anything at all, from sheer fear. I don't know why, but last night and this morning I've been particularly scared. You see, we've so few friends. There's really only Elmer to depend upon."

"I'd be only too glad to help in any way I can," I said. "If you ever have any need of me, just send me word, and I'll ride over at once. Have you anything definite you're thinking about now?"

She shook her head slowly. "No—no one thing in particular. It's only a horrid feeling that scares me now and then." She gave her head a little shake and laughed. "Please don't think me a coward, Mr. Coke. I'm not that. I'm sure I could do my part when the time came; but, you see, I've no one to talk to. Father won't listen, and that's what makes me afraid."

I could see she was no coward. A glance at her face showed me she was her father's daughter, only in her his rugged power was softened, and only the light of his eyes remained.

She stopped. "Good-by, Mr. Coke, and thanks for having listened to me. You see"—she stopped a moment, and a soft flush spread over her face—"I do so want a friend in Petersham, and that's my only excuse—"

"You have one in me, Miss Burney."

She gave me her hand, and then, with a little smile and nod, turned and walked back up the road. I vaulted upon my horse and set off to Petersham.

Happy Valley still smiled about me, but I felt a certain irony in its name. Human passions were there, and on no mediocre scale. The girl's words had made me feel as though already storm-clouds were gathering over the hills that made the rim of the bowl.

Yet I was very happy, strangely light-hearted. All my life I had thirsted for adventures, and here in Petersham it seemed as if I were likely to come upon them. I decided to keep my peace and watch.

Meanwhile I was growing very hungry. So I whipped up my horse, and was soon able to hand him over to Sam, who was sitting on the horse-block before my uncle's house, looking as if he had nothing to do but await my coming.

III.

It was past the middle of the afternoon before I set out to find Jerry Dolliver. My uncle had come home to his midday dinner, and I had given him an outline of my morning's trip. He did not seem surprised at what I told him. After dinner he had gone back to his office. Later, I set out to find Jerry.

All Petersham was drowsy with the soft spring warmth. I did not have to pass through the small business section of the town, but I could imagine how the men must be dozing over their ledgers, living as they did in the perfume of the lilac and honeysuckle, and looking out on such a lovely world. The tavern was quite deserted. The solitary attendant was trying to read a newspaper behind the bar,

but making sorry work of it. I asked him if Mr. Dolliver was about. He said no; that he had been there about dinner-time, and he thought I could find him if I went to the third house from the tavern and looked into the garden.

The third house from the tavern bore the sign of a shoemaker's shop over the door. I found the cobbler sitting in the doorway, and learned from him that Jerry Dolliver had a room there, and that he was back in the yard. The cobbler waved me through the house, and, following his directions, I came out on a little porch in the rear.

I had thought my uncle's garden luxuriant, but the one I now looked into quite surpassed it. It seemed to be owned in common by several houses, for it stretched back of a number of them, and it varied according to the respectability of the particular house in front. Where I stood, the flowers had not been well cared for, and the paths were strewn with odds and ends of rubbish; but to the left of me everything was in perfect bloom—as choice a spot as one might hope to see. I walked down the path, looking for Jerry. Finally I caught sight of his tall figure sitting on a bench under a tree. I walked over there, and had almost come upon him before I discovered that the trunk of the tree hid a very pretty girl. She was dressed in pale yellow, a rather striking color, but one which her very black hair and eyes carried successfully. At her belt was a huge bunch of bright red poppies, and two of them lay in her wavy hair.

I hesitated, thinking that the part of prudence would be to retreat, but even as I stood there Jerry turned about, and, catching sight of me, jumped to his feet.

"Ah, Richard Coke!" he exclaimed. "My friend of yesterday! Permit me the pleasure of presentin' one of my best and oldest friends to one of my best and newest. Miss Letty Shannon—Mr. Richard Coke."

Jerry bowed, I bowed, and the girl smiled at us both.

"I've heard tell of you already, Mr. Coke," she said, in a Southern accent which on her lips sounded very soft and sweet. "Jerry tells me you brought him home on your saddle yesterday."

She made room for me to sit beside her, and I accepted the invitation. An old negro who was working in this part of the garden came towards us, and Miss Shannon called to him.

"Uncle Joe, fetch us a pitcher of julep—your very best julep, please." The negro grinned and shambled off towards the house.

"It was recollectin' them juleps more than anythin' else," said Jerry, "that made me glad to come back to life yesterday."

It seemed to me there were a good many reasons why Jerry might wish to come back to life. I thought I had never seen so pretty a place as that in which we sat; the spreading magnolia tree above us, the roses

and lilacs, and the honeysuckle hedge on either side, and, best of all, this pretty Letty Shannon with the lovely lips and eyes.

Jerry was telling the story of our meeting—how, when he opened his eyes in the road, he had found me leaning over him; how I had reconciled him to mounting a horse again; how we had jogged home over the road, firmer friends with each yard of the way. As he talked, I found my old liking for him come back twofold. I think it must have sprung from his being so genuine.

They asked me to tell them what I had been doing, and I described my arrival at my uncle's house, the events of the night before, and my trip to Happy Valley. Both Miss Shannon and Jerry seemed much interested.

"Has n't Mr. Burney a daughter?" asked the former.

"Yes," I said; "a girl about your age."

Miss Shannon shot me a glance from her merry eyes.

"And how old might that be, Mr. Coke?" said she.

"Nineteen or thereabouts," I hazarded.

She laughed. "I fear Miss Burney's got the better of me. I had my twenty-third birthday yesterday."

"Well," said I, "I think twenty-three's a better age than nineteen. The latter's a little raw."

Miss Shannon laughed again. "Ah, I knew it. Mr. Coke has n't forgotten his Southern tongue. Tell me more about her, if you please."

"There's really nothing to tell, Miss Shannon," said I.

She looked reproachfully at me. "A pretty girl, and nothing to tell about her? Perhaps I was wrong, after all." She turned to Dol-liver. "Jerry, we'll have to take Mr. Coke in hand."

"He's yours," said Jerry.

"Agreed," said I. "I'd wish no better fate."

Miss Shannon smiled, and her hand, which lay on the bench, brushed against mine.

The old servant returned with a tray bearing three glasses and a large pitcher of julep, the mint leaves sticking out like a great crown about its rim. Miss Shannon filled the glasses, and Jerry and I drank her health. I had never tasted such nectar.

The shadows lengthened, and the three of us drifted on, chatting idly, too contented to make a change.

I may be mistaken, but it seemed to me that whenever I neared the subject of any underlying troubles in Petersham Jerry cleverly turned the conversation. I was sure he did this with a purpose when I asked him about the road that led off from the main one on the way to Happy Valley. He gave me a little look, his brows frowned, and with a quick laugh he said, "Ef I wuz you, when the road to Happy Valley's open, I'd not loiter by the way." And thereupon he began to

talk of something else, although I felt that Miss Shannon was almost as much interested in my questions as I was myself.

The girl and I got on famously. The julep was so delicious that when they urged me to drink another glass, and then another, I could not refuse. With each glass I found the charm of the situation grow, and I doubt whether I should have been able to tear myself away at all had it not been for the arrival of the old colored man, who announced that supper was ready.

"Won't you stay, Mr. Coke?" asked Miss Shannon.

"I should n't dare," said I, "when I've really just arrived. I don't know what my uncle would think of me, and, to tell the truth, I'm a bit afraid of him."

"Yes," put in Jerry; "a very remarkable man, Mr. Junius Coke. I know just that feelin' you mean. You'd better not disappoint him."

We arose and walked up through the garden. Miss Shannon stopped at a bush that was simply bent with yellow roses, and, picking one, put it in the buttonhole of my coat.

We went into the house, and there I was presented to Mrs. Shannon—a nice, elderly woman who wore a little white-laced cap, with a white lace shawl folded about her black gown, and seemed as charming in her old-worldliness as Letty Shannon in her bloom. She said she was sorry I could not stay for supper, and asked me to come to see them again. I thanked her heartily, and then, alarmed at the lateness of the hour, turned and hurried from the house.

When I reached my uncle's I pushed open the old iron gate, and went up the old flagstone path to the high steps. There was a vast solemnity about the mansion. I climbed the steps and went in at the high, square-cut doorway. The cool, dim reaches of the hall, hung with portraits of old members of the family, lay before me. I thought of the little garden I had just left. Then I thought of the evenings I should have to spend with Mr. Coke, with only Pompey and Sam hovering in the background. There seemed a void in the place, and then, suddenly, it occurred to me that what the house needed more than anything else was to have a woman in it.

IV.

A NIGHT's sleep sometimes makes a great difference in one's point of view, and I found myself the next morning less of a poet and more of a practical man than I had been when I went to bed. I do not mean to say that I had forgotten the pleasures of Letty's garden; far from it. I remembered them vividly, and liked to let my thoughts travel over them from time to time. But they could not hold the first place in the light of day. Something led me to be more energetic. I felt that somehow I was not taking the active part in Petersham's

affairs that I had fondly anticipated. I decided that I must look further into this business of the Burneys.

I was up early, and had breakfast with my uncle. I said nothing to him about my plans; in fact, something of his non-committal habit had taken hold of me. I realized that it was a valuable trait of character, and one in which I would do well to pattern after him. Therefore we talked of the weather, of the crops, of everything except the affairs which really concerned us. As regularly as clockwork he left the table and started for his office as the bell in the church tower struck the note of half after eight.

This day I decided to walk to Happy Valley. The distance was not far for a youth used to exercise, and I knew I could cover it by eleven. I told Sam that I should not need him during the day, and set off about nine o'clock. The advantage of being on foot was that I could loiter by the way, and leave the high-road whenever the fancy struck me.

The open fields were lovely, in striking contrast to the river-bank, and as I drew near the little hollow where Happy Valley lay, I stopped time and again to take in some particularly charming view of the distant country, or to turn aside to peep into some little circle of trees. I had almost come to the settlement itself when something white showing through the nearest trees in a pine grove caught my eye. I turned aside, and stepped down a little path towards the white object. When I came inside the nearest trees, I found an open circle covered with soft pine needles, and seated under one of the trees Miss Emily Burney, with a large book in her lap. The pine needles had dulled the sound of my foot-steps so that I caught sight of her before she saw me. I watched her for a few seconds. She was undeniably pretty, browned by outdoor life, and looking like a creature of the woods. I noticed that her hair was tied with a red ribbon.

I stepped into the circle, and she looked up. "Why!" she said, "it's you!" She seemed a little surprised, and yet not so much so as I had expected.

"Yes, it's I," I answered, laughing. "That's an easy way of getting out of having forgotten my name."

She closed the book slowly. There was a certain deliberation about everything she did. But she did not take her eyes from me. "I have n't forgotten your name. It's Richard Coke. Only, it happened that I was just thinking of you."

"I'm glad of that. What were you thinking?" I asked, throwing myself on the soft pine needles at her feet.

"I was wondering if you really meant what you said yesterday, or whether the people in Petersham would n't make you change. I was wondering how I could reach you if we really needed you, and whether you would come."

"I've given my promise, and I don't go back on that. Has there been more trouble?"

"Yes," she said; "a little."

Suddenly her face brightened. "But I came out here to forget all about it, Mr. Coke. Sometimes when I'm frightened or worried I take a book and run away to this hiding-place. I was reading 'Lorna Doone.' Would you like to hear some of it?"

There was a very sweet frankness about the girl's manner. She seemed to want to include me in her pleasures as well as in her worries, and as I looked up at her invitation, and saw in her brown eyes that she really hoped I would care to hear the story, I nodded and begged her to go on with it.

When she came to the end of the chapter Miss Burney closed the book with a little sigh of regret at having to stop the story for a time.

"Is n't it fine? Don't you wish you were living in times like those?"

I sat up and clasped my hands about my knees. "It seems to me we're living in quite as exciting times."

She laughed. "Perhaps we are. But they're too close to really enjoy. Well, I must be getting home, or they'll be wondering what's happened to me. Which way were you going, Mr. Coke, when you wandered in here?"

"To the *Clarion* office," I answered.

"Then our roads lie together. Come, Father'll be glad to see you."

We left the circle of trees and returned to the road. We had not far to go before we reached the *Clarion* office. I followed Miss Burney into the house, the door of which stood open, and we peeped into the living-rooms as we went through the hall. Finding no one there, we went on to the office.

Elmer Simmons stood in the centre of the room, holding an open letter in his hand. I thought I had never seen a more grotesque figure than he made. His mouth was open, and the lower jaw had dropped to what was almost an imbecile surprise. He must have been running his hands through his hair, for the latter was wildly tumbled about, and one long black lock hung across the centre of his forehead. As we entered he turned and stared at us, more particularly at me, and I must own that I returned the compliment in full measure.

"What's the matter, Elmer?" said Miss Burney. "What's become of father?" There was a little note of apprehension in her voice, but Simmons did nothing to relieve it. "Oh, Elmer," she said, "what's in that letter? Let me see it."

He went slowly across to her, still keeping his eyes fixed on me. He handed her the paper and then stepped away again.

Miss Burney held the letter so that I could see it, and we read it

together. It was a most extraordinary document, ill-written, with an evident attempt to disguise the handwriting, and decorated with a number of large blots. It said:

If the editor of the *Clarion* don't stop printing such lies as he did last week, he'll find himself ridden out of the State in a way he won't like. Mad dogs have got to be muzzled, and he's one.

The paper was simply signed, "Vigilance Committee." I took the paper from Miss Burney's hand.

"When did this come? Who brought it?" I demanded of Simmons. He was silent.

"Come," I cried, losing patience with him, "you know I'm a friend of the Burneys. For Heaven's sake, don't stand there saying nothing!"

He looked at Miss Burney, then at me. "'T wa' n't very long after Miss Emily left this morning, and Mr. Burney comes in here and finds that paper lying on his desk. The window was open, and somebody must have climbed in. I could n't find no traces of him. Mr. Burney read it and laughed. Then he went on getting the paper ready." He hesitated a moment. "I don't think it's no laughing matter."

"What's become of father now?" the girl asked.

"Said he was going for a walk to freshen up his thoughts. Said he'd be back for dinner."

"Well," said Miss Burney, "I don't see that there's anything we can do just now. You'll stay to dinner with us, Mr. Coke? I must go out and see what we have to eat."

She left us, and I put the anonymous letter on the table.

"Does Mr. Burney carry a pistol?" I asked.

Simmons nodded. "He does, but I don't think there's any good in such things." He smiled as if at some little joke of his, and I could not help feeling my original dislike of him growing stronger. He seemed so unlike ordinary people—such a curious combination of stupidity and cunning.

"I'd advise you to get one, then," I said shortly, "and take a little time practising at a tree. I don't think a letter like that's just sent for fun."

"No more do I," said he; "no more does Mr. Burney. But he won't give up writing what he thinks, and so I guess we've got to take what comes."

He walked over to the cases of type and started working at them. I found a small mirror in the corner of the room, and tried to make myself look as presentable as possible for dinner.

Suddenly two shots rang out. They must have been fired near the house. I dropped the comb and wheeled about. Simmons was staring at me across the type-table.

"What's that?" I demanded sharply.

He shook his head. I crossed the room, went down the hall, and into the kitchen. There I found Miss Burney standing at the door. Her face was white with fear.

"Did you hear?" she cried. "What was it?"

"You wait here," I said. "I'll go and see."

I strode down the road, and had gone only a few paces when I saw John Burney coming toward me. He walked very straight, with a certain pride in his manner.

"Thank Heaven," I cried, "you're all right! I thought some one might have been firing at you."

"So they were," he said as I came up to him. "Some one fired at me from behind a haystack over in that field. They did n't know how to shoot, or perhaps they did n't want to hit me."

I stared at Mr. Burney, sudden admiration for him rising in me. Here was a man who knew that his life was in danger, who had, in fact, just been under fire, and yet who could smile and show not a trace of fear.

"If we know we're in the right, there's no more reason why we should be physical cowards than moral ones, eh, Mr. Coke?" Then, with a sudden change of manner, he asked, "Where's Emily?"

I turned about and walked with him to the house. His daughter stood in the doorway, and as she saw us coming she ran forward, her hands outstretched. She flung her arms about her father's neck and kissed him time and again.

"Oh," she said, "how glad I am you're all right, Father dear! But you must be more careful. It's terrible to think of the risks you run."

Mr. Burney patted Emily on the cheek, and, with his arm about her waist, led her to the house. He spoke consolingly, quieting her in a very short time, even as he had already quieted and strengthened me.

A little later we four sat down to dinner. I did not expect that Elmer Simmons would join us, but it seemed that he was a regular sharer of the table. Mr. Burney sat at one end, and his daughter at the other, while Simmons and I were on the two sides. Mr. Burney did most of the talking, speaking usually to me, telling me of his plans for the *Clarion*, and how he hoped that he was arousing interest in Petersham in his crusade. Simmons never raised his voice above a whisper, and only spoke twice to Emily when he actually had to. The girl herself was very quiet, still a little shaken, I think, by the danger her father had been through.

"You must not think me an egotist, Mr. Coke," said Mr. Burney, during the meal, "but my thoughts are so consumed with the work I have on hand that I can think and speak of little else. Emily knows

that I have more sides to me, that I take an interest in hunting and fishing, in books and music and all pleasant things that other people love. I should like to be on good terms with all my neighbors, to live quietly, doing some work that might be useful, getting strength from this beautiful country on which God has showered so many blessings. I don't want to be always in opposition, always stirring people up, always denouncing and declaiming; yet that is what I must do here and now.

"I am here if they choose to come for me," he continued in time. "If it ever comes to that, I'm not unarmed, nor is Elmer, and we can at least give them a fight. As for Emily"—here his glance wavered a trifle—"she knows that her father is no coward. I don't think even these men would dare touch her."

About three I started back to Petersham, revolving in my mind the things I had learned that day, very much disturbed at some things, and yet with a surprising strength of resolution. If trouble came—and I had a feeling that it was almost surely coming—I knew what I should do. I should take my stand in that whitewashed house that bore the *Clarion's* sign, and should at least do my part in protecting this great-hearted man. I knew that Emily would not flinch; but time and again I found myself wishing that the pale and sinister face of Burney's assistant would not look over the shoulders of the other two.

I had left Happy Valley behind me and come into the first ridge of hills when a small boy came running up back of me.

"A man told me to give you this," he said, as he pulled at my sleeve. He shoved a small, tri-cornered note in my hand.

"What man?" I asked.

"Dunno," said the boy, and, without a word, he took to his heels and ran back the road towards the settlement.

I unfolded the piece of paper. Written on it were the words:

Don't be a fool. Don't go out to Burney's any more. If you do, you'll live to regret it.

There was no signature. It might have been the mate to the other note. I crumpled it up and flung it in the bushes. Then I took up my march again, and now I determined that before another day had passed I would see Jerry and have him get me a revolver.

V.

SEVERAL days passed before my next visit to the Burneys'. I saw Letty and spent delightful moonlight hours in her garden. I found Jerry and had him get me a revolver, and I asked my uncle again

to put me in possession of my father's papers. The next issue of the *Clarion* stirred my blood, but made me more fearful than ever for John Burney's safety. The first chance I got I rode over to the Valley.

I rang Burney's door-bell, and even as on my first visit had the door opened to me by Elmer Simmons.

"What do you want?" he blurted, his eyes narrowing as they had a habit of doing when he looked at me. "She's out."

"I did n't ask for her," I answered. "I did n't ask for any one. I'm a friend of both the Burneys, which is more than every one can say."

I had spoken without thinking. Now I saw that he took the words to himself. Perhaps I had a suspicion of him in my mind.

"You mean——" he began, still holding the door so that only his head appeared.

"I mean nothing," I exclaimed, and, giving the door a push, threw him backward and entered.

The first door on my right was the family sitting-room. I looked in and saw Emily sitting near a window, sewing.

"Good morning," I said. "Is Mr. Burney about?"

"I'm so sorry," she said. "He's over at Farmer Johnson's. The little boy there broke a bone in his ankle, and father has some knowledge of surgery. Won't you wait for him?"

Again I noted the clear frankness of her eyes. I decided that I did n't care to see her father, after all, and that all I wanted was to sit there and talk with her.

"Have you seen the paper?" she asked, as I took a chair near her.

"Yes. It's not likely to make things any pleasanter, but I think it's better that way. Such things have got to be fought out." I proceeded to give her my views of the situation.

So we sat for some little time, she sewing and occasionally glancing out of the open window up the road, as if she were keeping an eye open for her father's return, and I sitting in front of her, suddenly grown quite peaceful and contented.

Only one shadow marred the serenity of my sky. Elmer would persist in coming into the room upon an average of once every five minutes, although, so far as I could see, there was absolutely no reason for his doing so. Seated as I was, I could see him poke his head in at the door, take a quick glance at the two of us, and then, dropping his eyes as though he were all humility, sidle into the room with his peculiar, crab-like step. Once he merely came in to look at a map which hung on the wall. Another time he got half-way to Miss Burney and then turned suddenly, as if he had forgotten something, and left the room. I had a feeling that he was trying to keep watch over us, though why I could not imagine. Miss Burney never seemed to notice his coming.

He seemed to be like a shadow one is so used to that one pays it no attention.

An hour must have elapsed in this pleasant, desultory fashion, when I saw the same small boy who had accosted me on my way home coming along the road. He was an innocent-looking urchin, with bare feet, and an old tattered straw hat pulled down about his ears. He looked the very last being in the world conspirators would choose as their tool.

"Who is that boy?" I asked, pointing out of the window at him.

Miss Burney looked up quickly, and followed my gaze.

"Oh, he's the blacksmith's little boy. He's always running errands through the town."

"And who is the blacksmith?" I asked. "What sort of a man, I mean?"

Miss Burney studied her sewing before she answered.

"He's a great big man, with a voice like a trumpet-blast. I don't think he likes father; at least, I don't think he likes father's publishing the *Clarion*. He's always sneering at it. And yet I don't think he's really bad, for I never saw a man more kind to animals. He has a little hospital for dogs, and I've often watched him caring for them as though they were children. His name's Job Trainer. The little boy's Aaron."

I saw that Aaron had turned off the road and was coming across the grass toward our window. "Hullo!" I cried, as he came directly under it. The boy looked up with a broad grin and held up a piece of paper.

"It's another message!" I cried with a laugh, and stretched out my hand for it.

"Oh!" said Emily, with a little gasp, as if she were frightened.

The whole proceeding—the very small, grinning boy, the little square of paper, and the method of conveying it through the window—seemed so perfectly innocent to me that I could n't help chuckling.

"What's there to fear in this?" I said. "If I had a scrap of paper, I'd send them back a message."

Her hand was on my sleeve. "No, no," she said. "Don't do anything to make them more angry."

By now I had taken the folded piece of paper, and the little boy had again run off to the road. I stood up, holding the note, slowly unfolding it, my eyes on Emily's face, which was paler than usual. I opened the paper, but before I could read it a long, bony hand had reached out from back of me and pulled it from my grasp. I wheeled about, to find Elmer Simmons standing close beside me.

"What do you mean?" I demanded, sudden anger rising in me at the sight of this man I detested so near me.

He did not answer at once, but looked at Emily as if waiting for her to speak.

"Give it to me, Elmer," she said quietly, reaching out her hand.

He hesitated, mumbled something I could not catch, and finally gave her the paper.

"What a lot of fuss we're making over nothing!" said I, for some reason annoyed and disgusted at the whole performance.

Emily turned the paper so that she might read it, but before she could make out the lines Simmons had reached out his hand and repeated his performance. He took a single step forward, and his skinny fingers closed over the sheet like the talons of a great bird.

"No, no, Miss Em'ly," he begged; "don't—don't read it."

"I must," she said positively.

"No, no," he continued, and his talon-like grip closed on the paper and crumpled it into a ball.

"What do you mean?" I cried. "You prowling thief!"

He half faced toward me, and it seemed to me that he fairly leered at me.

"Give it up!" I demanded, by this time boiling with indignation.

His lips opened, and I could see the gleam of his teeth. If ever I hated a man, I did this one then.

"No, no," he repeated; "not even to you, Mr. Coke." He said my name as though throwing an insult in my face. Before I knew what I was doing, I had sprung forward and my fist caught him square on the jaw. He crashed to the floor, legs and arms sprawling out as if the wires which held him in place had suddenly been broken.

I stood above him, my fist still clenched, my face blazing with rage. Then I heard as from a distance the girl's voice, cold and clear as ice.

"Mr. Coke, how could you, how could you do it? What a coward you are!"

I slowly turned from the man who lay sprawling before me to front Miss Burney. Her face was colorless, her eyes were looking at me with deep horror. She drew back as if afraid that I might touch the hem of her skirt.

"You might as well have struck me," she said. "Elmer is almost my brother. What he did he did for my sake, and you—oh!" she cried and turned away from me in a passion of indignation, "I did n't think you could do such a thing!"

My anger had passed. I was as cold as I had been hot before.

"Forgive me, forgive me!" I cried. "I did n't know what I did. I lost control of myself."

"Oh!" she answered, "but you, a strong man, to hit a man like Elmer when he was n't ready. You might have killed him. It looked as though you wanted to."

She had turned her back to me. I stood there a few minutes longer in silence, waiting for her to move. She did not do so. Finally she spoke, her face kept from me.

"You had better go now, I think. There's nothing more to be said."

I waited a second, and then, picking up my hat, turned to the door. Simmons had risen and stood back against the wall. I did not look at him. I simply groped my way out of the room. I verily believe that I would have cut off my right arm if by it I could have taken back that blow.

VI.

THAT blow I had struck Elmer changed the course of my life in Petersham. I felt shut out of Emily Burney's friendship forever, and I turned desperately to Letty. I decided that I loved her, and before three weeks had passed I made sure she cared for me. I asked her to marry me, and, after much persuasion, she promised to go to a minister's at a nearby town and become my wife. She made me wait a short time, however, and meanwhile other serious events took place.

The day came when my uncle gave me my father's papers. It was late one afternoon when he called me over to his desk in the office and produced a square tin box from a desk-drawer. The box was of the kind in which lawyers keep old documents, and a key was tied to the handle on top by a piece of red tape.

Mr. Coke leaned back in his swinging chair and smiled at me. "There, Richard," said he, "are your father's papers. Bonds, stocks, mortgages, title-deeds, and all evidences of claim. They were scattered here and there for safe keeping, and also because the estate has been much complicated by changes of value in the South. It has taken me time to collect them; it will take you time to look them over." He paused and smiled again. I noticed how fine and even his white teeth were. "I trust you are satisfied, Nephew, and that you are convinced what a careful guardian I have been."

I stepped forward, ashamed to remember I had ever thought him cold. "Uncle Junius," said I hurriedly, "I know whatever you've done has been for the best. I hope I've not been impatient. I beg your pardon if I've seemed so. You see—I simply have n't understood."

"Quite so, Richard. Youth rarely understands the things age knows. You are groping about for those guiding strings I long ago discovered. You will find them in time if you are patient. But remember that haste is always the thief of time."

I was not thinking of his words, but only of the man. He was my father's brother, the head of our house, and such a fine head he made.

My uncle Junius was of the type of men who had framed the Constitution.

It was on my lips to tell him that I was engaged to Letty. He was entitled to know this, and not learn it by chance after we were married. I had had too many secrets from him, and was ashamed of them now. I would show that I could be frank, too.

But my uncle was speaking again. "I might suggest," said he, "if you'll take it as just a suggestion, that reticence is the greatest asset a man can have. Do not cultivate the habit of speaking all your thoughts, and especially not those that bear on business." He stretched out his hand to the tin box. "I would n't open that and look over the papers here, for instance. Any one may come in and find you at it. Take them home, and we will go over them together, where we can be safe from interruption. Are you engaged to-night?"

I had an appointment to meet Letty that evening, and so had to admit that I was.

"Well, no matter," said my uncle. "Morning is a better time than night for business. Take the box up to your room and keep it there until morning. We will open the box together in my study after breakfast. I'm anxious to help you with the papers. Will that suit?"

"Yes," said I; "that will suit me perfectly."

Mr. Coke untied the tape that held the key, inserted the key in the lock, and opened the box. "There," said he, "just glance at the pile, Richard boy."

I looked and saw a great stack of folded papers. I nodded my head.

"Now," said my uncle, "I give them into your keeping." He shut the lid, locked the box, retied the key to the handle, and, rising, handed the box across the desk to me. It was quite a ceremonious proceeding.

I took the box to my own small desk and pushed it back against the wall. I opened a law-book and steadfastly bent my eyes upon it, but did not read a line. Fortunately, Mr. Coke soon rose and suggested that we go homeward. I was quite ready, and tucked the box safely under my arm. My uncle locked the door of his office and joined me on the sidewalk. Then, in state, we made our way to the old house on the corner.

I was glad to reach the old house. With the box still under my arm, I climbed the stairs. In my own room I placed the precious burden on a small table near my bed, where lay a few books I was reading, some note-paper, and a paper-cutter.

All the pleasures of life seemed met in Letty's garden that evening. She was sweetness itself. Our close companionship thrilled me at every touch of her hand or gown. At last I told her of my father's papers, that they were in my possession now, and that I was no longer a dependent on my uncle. That sense of freedom went to my head

like wine. "Why wait longer, Letty?" I begged. "I have ready money—enough for a wedding trip. There's a person lives half-way to Brownsville who will marry us. Will you go to-morrow night?"

At first she protested, tried to argue, said she did not believe in elopements. Gradually, however, she capitulated. Finally she consented. I cannot describe the sudden sense of mastery that flooded me.

It was late when I reached home, and I tiptoed through the hall and up the stairs, so that I might awaken no one. The night was warm, and I left my door into the hall open. I did not light the gas at first, preferring the darkness while I leaned on the window-ledge, breathing the fragrance of the garden. There was no moon, but a few stars looked down on me.

I heard the clock in the hall strike one, and forced myself to stop dreaming. I lighted a candle and prepared for bed. The process did not take me long. The last thing I saw before I blew out the candle was the black tin box containing my father's papers, on the table near the curtains of the bed. The wick of the candle can scarcely have ceased to glow before I was asleep.

It must have been some time later when I woke. A noise in the room had disturbed me. It was very dark, and I lay quite still, listening and waiting. Presently I heard a movement, the least creak of a board in the floor, and then, staring in front of me, as I lay on my side, I felt, rather than saw, that some one was in the room, standing to the right of the bed.

I lay still, wondering what was about to happen. I heard another creak, then followed another silence, then came the sound of a book on the table gently moved. Some one was near me now, right by the table, close at hand. I cursed myself for a fool for having left the revolver Jerry had given me in my trousers pocket.

In a flash I knew what the thief was after! The tin box on the table! Even that second I heard a hand rap against the box. My own hand slid out of bed, between the curtains, to the sharp steel paper-cutter that I knew lay on the table. I gripped it in my fingers. Then, suddenly, I sat up and struck with all my might at the place where I thought the thief's arm to be. I struck something, the loose cloth of a sleeve, and the sharp knife pinned it to the table. I heard a wrench, the tear of cloth, and then a leap across the room. I was out of bed, but the table, fallen from my blow, lay in my way to trip me. I saw a dark object spring to the window-ledge and then vanish. By the time I reached the window the man was out of sight.

The top of the bay-window projected about a foot beneath my window-ledge, and the distance from there to the ground was easy to jump. I pulled on my trousers, got on my shoes, and followed through the window. I alighted easily on the grass of the garden, but by

that time the thief was gone as absolutely as if he had had an hour's start. I listened, but there was not a sound except the gentle sighing of wind in the trees.

I did not stay long in the garden. I saw how useless would be the attempt to discover which way the thief had gone. A trellis, which had been covered with honeysuckle when I came to Petersham, rose close to the bay-window, and by its aid I climbed, with some swaying and balancing, back to my window-ledge. I had never before realized how completely I was at the mercy of any midnight visitor. For the matter of that, I believe that every house in the town was equally trustful of men's honesty.

I crossed my room and lighted a candle on the mantel. I carried the candle over to the bed. The table lay on the floor, just outside the bed-curtains, where I had stumbled on it as I jumped up. The books were scattered about. The tin box was gone. I stooped down, and, picking up the table, set it on its feet. There, near the centre of its shining oval top, was the paper-cutter, driven firmly into the wood. It pinned to the table a piece of colored cloth. I pulled out the paper-cutter, and held the cloth, a strip some six inches long, close to the candle. It bore a red honeysuckle pattern. It seemed curious material for the sleeve of a man's coat.

This survey had taken me scarcely two minutes. I stuffed the cloth in my trousers pocket, pulled on a coat, and rang the bell for Sam. Without waiting for him to answer, I went out into the hall, candle in hand. I passed the head of the stairs and went on down the corridor to my uncle's room. I knocked loudly on this door, and then, pushing it open, entered.

My uncle's bed, like mine, was a four-poster, with canopy top, and curtains that shielded the sleeper's head. "Uncle!" I called. "Uncle Junius! Wake up, Uncle!" I stood beside him and put my hand on his shoulder. He was very sound asleep.

He turned over and opened his eyes. "What is it?" he asked, in the confused manner of one suddenly awakened.

"A thief!" I cried. "I've been robbed! Some one has stolen my father's papers! He got out by the window and disappeared!"

Mr. Coke sat up in bed, very tall and white in his night-clothes. "Good God, Richard!" he said. "Are you sure? Your father's papers? Ring for Pompey!"

I pulled the rope by his bed while my uncle slipped on a pair of slippers and a dressing-gown that lay on a chair near at hand. Sam had followed me, and now stood in the doorway, candle in hand. Before my uncle was ready, Pompey had joined us.

Mr. Coke led our procession of four back through the hall and into my wing of the house. We stood about the table while I described

what I had seen. We glanced hastily about the room for any other clues. Then we went downstairs and into the garden, to search there. We could not find even the print of a foot on the grass. We had no idea in which direction to turn.

We must have consumed half an hour in ineffectual search of the back of the house and the grounds before we gave up the attempt. My uncle asked me to step into his study, and dismissed the servants. He sat down in his favorite arm-chair, and placed his candle on a stand beside him.

"I'm very sorry, Richard boy," he said. "I feel it was partly my fault for letting you have the papers. But I knew you wanted them, and could n't imagine any one stealing them overnight. To the best of my knowledge, no one knew they were here. You did n't mention that fact to any one, did you?"

"No, sir, I did not." I was glad to remember that even when I had spoken to Letty of the papers I had not told her where they were.

"Sure?" he said, fixing his eye upon me. "Think!"

"Positive," I answered. "I told no one where they were."

"H'm," he mused. "Who could have wanted them? I must admit, Richard, the whole matter's a mystery to me. We must go slowly in this, must feel our way. The papers were valuable, and some can't be replaced. There were many coupon bonds, and other documents difficult to chase. The loss is serious, Richard." He glanced at me. "But don't be down-hearted, boy. What man can do to repair it shall be done!"

We sat in my uncle's study half an hour longer, discussing different aspects of the matter. We reached no plausible solution. By that time the summer dawn was lighting the sky. My uncle rose. "I want an hour's rest, Richard. I advise you to try and rest yourself."

I returned to my room and threw myself on the bed. For a long time I lay staring at the canopy. Finally I dozed. When I woke Sam was standing beside me, and the bright sunlight was streaming in at the window.

VII.

Two most momentous facts stared me in the face as I opened my eyes and gazed at the canopied top of my bed. I was to run away and be married to Letty that night, and I had lost my father's papers. I rose like a man in a trance, and in that state let Sam shave me. Then I hurried into my clothes automatically.

My uncle told me at breakfast that he had several lines along which he intended hunting for the thief, but for some reason he did not see fit to confide them to me. His reticence irritated me. He seemed to me to be trying to make even more mysterious what was already

quite enough of a mystery. I was all for an immediate announcement of the robbery, and the offer of a reward for any information that might lead to a recovery.

Mr. Coke shook his head at my suggestions. "No, Richard, our best chance is to try to learn privately what use is made of the papers. They may be pledged as collateral at some bank, or used in a business deal in the neighborhood, but once raise a hue and cry, and the man won't dare show them to any one this side of New York."

Like so many of my uncle's statements, this position did seem the logical one to take, and yet I could not help feeling that it was not really the best way to attain the end. Sometimes he seemed to me almost as impersonal as a business corporation, and his method of work quite as involved, and he never seemed more so than on this particular morning.

It was my feeling of revolt at this attitude of my uncle's that led me when I went down-town to stop at the office of a friend of mine, a Mr. Grant. That gentleman had just finished reading his morning's mail, and with the greatest affability asked me what I would have of him. I asked his permission to close the door into the hall. When we were quite safe from all possible eavesdroppers, I drew my chair close to his, and recounted the facts of the robbery. He listened without interruption until I had finished.

"What a very singular occurrence!" said he as I came to the end. "You're quite sure that no one but Mr. Coke and yourself knew of your having the papers?"

"Positive," said I. "I told no one, and my uncle says that he didn't mention them to a soul."

"Did you see enough of the thief to describe him at all?"

"No. All I could make out was a very vague black shape. I struck at him in the dark rather by instinct than because I knew where to aim."

"And you tore a part of his sleeve? Have you got that with you?"

I drew out the small torn piece of cloth from my pocket, and placed it on the desk. Mr. Grant picked it up and examined it carefully. "It looks to me," he said, "as if Mr. Thief went in for rather fancy dressing. That's not part of an ordinary coat; it's more like a smoking-jacket or dressing-gown. Have you seen that pattern before?"

"Never. But what on earth would a thief be doing in such clothes?"

Mr. Grant shook his head. "May I keep this for a short time?" he asked. "It interests me."

"Certainly," I assented. "I've come to you for advice. Of course my uncle has taken the matter in charge, but the trouble is that, being my uncle, I'm afraid he won't listen to me and my suggestions."

"Just so," said the lawyer. "I quite understand your feelings. But he is your uncle—we must n't let ourselves forget that." It seemed to me that he was looking at me very closely.

"Of course not, sir," I hastened to answer. "I have the greatest respect for him in the world."

"And what would you propose doing now?"

"Putting the matter at once in charge of the police, hiring detectives, if we can get any, and drawing a net about Petersham so that he can't escape."

Mr. Grant studied the piece of cloth which he still held in his hand, then he wheeled about in his swing-chair and gazed out the window into the street, his back to me, for some time. When he turned, the faintest quizzical smile was on his lips. "On that point I differ with you," he said. "I incline to think that Mr. Coke is right, and that we are more likely to get to the bottom of the affair if we keep it to ourselves."

"Of course you know best," said I. "When I came in to see you I decided to place the matter entirely in your hands."

"Then," he said in a very solemn manner, "I accept the charge. I knew your father, and I think he would have wished me to do this. I will take the matter up at once. I only request that you don't mention my interest in it to your uncle. If he has his secrets from you, you're entitled to have yours from him."

That was exactly how I viewed the situation, and I was much relieved to find that Mr. Grant agreed with me. I thanked him, and left his office fairly well satisfied with the situation.

Never shall I forget the hours of that interminable day. My thoughts had but one goal, seven-thirty o'clock that night, when I was to call with a carriage at Letty's door. A hundred times I went over each step of our elopement, and each time the details grew more blurred in my excited mind.

Early in the afternoon a light rain began to fall, threatening to grow heavier by nightfall. I stuck to my books until I felt that it was physically impossible for me to sit in my chair any longer, and then, excusing myself to my uncle with the statement that I was not feeling very well, I left the office and went home. I had made all my arrangements for our night's ride that noon, there was absolutely nothing for me to do but to get through the next five hours as best I could. I went to my room and lay down on my bed, thinking that I might sleep. Ten minutes convinced me of the fallacy of that idea. I stood at my window and watched the rain soften the outlines of the trees and bushes in the garden. Ten more minutes may have passed so. Then I went down-stairs and followed the path to the little arbor in the centre of the garden. It was not a particularly cheerful spot on a rainy day,

but it appealed to me in my peculiar frame of mind. The air would be fresh out there, and I could smoke a pipe and drowse.

I settled myself on one of the benches in the arbor, my back against a post, and puffed at my pipe. I watched some robins preen themselves in the rain. I saw drop after drop of water fall from a shining mulberry leaf directly into the heart of a rose which had opened out like a cup. The world seemed glad of the rain, and I tried to feel glad, too. I think I had just reached this thought when something attracted my attention. A man was coming down the back-stairs of the house, and was taking a little side-path through the grounds, which ran at right-angles to the one to the arbor. I could not remember having seen the man before, but that might have been due to the fact that he wore a greatcoat with upturned collar to protect him from the rain, and had pulled a big wideawake down about his ears.

Somewhat to my surprise, the man passed all the outbuildings and kept straight on. This path was seldom used, and, running some distance through the grounds, ultimately led to an old gate, which opened into a little lane in the rear of the houses on the main street. Curiosity finally overcame me, and, turning up my coat-collar, I started off in pursuit, taking care to follow at a very discreet distance.

The man went through the gate into the lane, and I followed. He took the little road, which was so seldom used that it was overgrown with weeds, and I kept my safe distance back of him. The lane ultimately ran into a wide road, and down this we splashed. After half a mile of this the man passed by a turnstile into an open meadow, and, taking a little path that skirted the side of the field, finally came to the woods. By now it was growing dark, and my watch told me it was after five, but my curiosity was rising with each step I took, so I also plunged into the woods. Here I had to be doubly circumspect, lest the crackle of leaves or snapping of twigs might give me away, but apparently I was successful, for the man kept steadily on. As far as I could judge, we were gradually working into the country where the old quarries lay.

The path became more and more clogged with underbrush, and I had increasing difficulty in following my guide. I was quite sure now that we were bearing into that desolate country to the southwest of Petersham. Presently I caught the sound of snapping twigs in other directions, which gave me an idea that there might be other people not far from us. Still I kept on, determined to see the affair through, if there were time.

Suddenly I found we had come to the edge of the clearing. The man in the greatcoat went on, but some instinct bade me stop and peer carefully ahead of me before I followed him. It was well I did so. A minute later I had stepped to the left of the path, and crouched

behind a screen of young pine trees. I stayed there, squatting close to the ground, while I got my bearings.

Before me was an open space, semicircular in shape, and not unlike the cleared stage of a theatre, only much larger than any stage I had ever seen. Trees formed a half-circle on the side toward me, and the other side was the high cliff of what must once have been a large quarry. The earth of the cliff was a dark red in the rain, and the top overhung the cleared space at the bottom so that it formed a sort of cave. The place was very secret. A road appeared to enter it from the south, but beyond that I could see no trace of opening nor of path. One swift glance told me that much, and then my eyes came back to the scene being enacted under the overhang of the quarry's cliff.

More than a score of men were gathered there, all but one or two on horses, all wrapped in greatcoats that hid their clothes, and all masked. Even the man I had followed from the garden must have slipped a black mask over his face at some point in the woods, because, although I looked for him carefully, I could only conclude he was one of the two or three who were unmounted. I knew where I was now: I had come upon a meeting of the Night Riders.

The band was gathering strength every minute. As I watched I saw half a dozen ride in at the little gate of the arena, salute by touching hand to hat, and join one of the groups. Some of the men sat their mounts in silence, grim figures in the twilight and the rain; others seemed to be talking to one another. I was too far away to hear anything that was said. All I could do was to watch and wonder what deviltry was afoot.

Instinct pointed my thoughts all one way: they meant harm to the editor of the *Clarion*. These were the men who wanted to keep the country lawless, who were interested in the moonshiners, and they had determined to have their own way. Before me rose the picture of Mr. Burney's fine, heroic face and figure, and the image of Emily, her eyes filled with devotion and implicit faith. Instinctively I uttered a prayer that they might be saved from the rough hands of this crew. If only I could have gone directly to them and stayed with them until the present danger passed! I pulled my watch from my pocket, held the dial close to my face, and studied it. It was high time that I should be getting back to my uncle's house.

As best I could, I stumbled along the narrow wood-path, careful at first to make no noise, and then where I drew farther away from the quarry broke into a trot. Finally I came to a branch that I was certain would bring me home sooner. My judgment was correct; in half an hour I was back in the garden. I hurried into the dining-room, and found that my uncle had sent word he was taking supper with a friend. I snatched a hasty mouthful, and told Pompey that

I was not feeling well and could eat nothing more. Then I went to my room and changed my wet clothes for dry ones. I took a roll of bills from a bureau drawer and stuffed them into my pocket. Now I was ready to go to the livery stable and get the carriage that was to take Letty and me that night to the parsonage. The excitement of action nerved me like a tonic, and yet in spite of my intense excitement I could not get out of my head the thought of that gathering in the quarry, and the fear of what it might portend.

VIII.

By now the rain had become a steady downpour, and the world was streaked with gray lines as I came out on the porch and started down the steps. I had put on a heavy overcoat, and pulled a rough tweed cap about my ears, and yet I was chilly. I blew on my hands to bring some warmth to them. I wondered if bridegrooms ordinarily felt as moody as did I.

Circumstances did not combine to make me cheerful. The stone-paved walk from the steps to the gate was sunk in water, and as I turned for a moment on closing the gate and looked back at the house it seemed utterly desolate and drab. There sprang up in my heart an overwhelming desire for comfort, a wish for some one who might walk through the rain with me hand in hand, who would sit by the fire with me, and make such a house as my uncle's less cold and stiff. With the longing my steps quickened. I was going to such a one; only a few short minutes divided me from her now.

I reached the livery stable and found that the man in charge had thoughtfully provided me with a snug covered carriage. I knew the cheerful-faced old negro who was to drive. Giving him his directions, I got into the carriage, and we rolled out into the muddy road.

The Shannons' house was not very far away, and yet I must have mopped my brow with my handkerchief a dozen separate times before we reached it. The rain was turning warmer, and the air seemed filled with steam. I was glad when we stopped and I could leave the stuffy carriage.

I was to meet Letty in the hall. She was to be on watch, and when she heard the carriage-wheels to come down from her room in the front of the house, dressed ready to go. The front door was unlocked, as it always was. I pushed it open, and stepped into the hall. There was no one there.

I stood still a moment, my heart beating in my ears. I fumbled for my watch, pulled it out, and saw that I was exactly on time. I shuffled my feet, and coughed lightly. No one appeared.

Another minute passed. I thought I heard footsteps overhead and listened intently. The sound ceased. Then a perfect panic of fear

seized me, and my thoughts flew about wildly. I made an effort to control myself, and stepped to the sitting-room door on the right of the hall.

The door was ajar, and I pushed it back. The room was dim in the twilight, but at the farther end I could see Mrs. Shannon seated in a chair before the small coal fire. She was dozing, her hands clasped in her lap. I hesitated a moment, uncertain what to do, then stole noiselessly out into the hall.

The Shannons had one servant, an old negro woman who had always seemed to me as stupid as she was fat. I made up my mind to search above-stairs for Letty and run the risk of meeting the negress on the way. I went up to the second floor, and called softly, "Letty, Letty!" There was no answer. The door of her room in the front of the house stood wide open before me, and after a second's thought I tiptoed across and looked in. The room was empty.

I must have stood some little time staring blankly before me. I think the picture of that deserted room was focussed indelibly upon my mind, because even now I sometimes come upon it quite unexpectedly. Outside the two windows the criss-cross lines of rain; the heavy wooden bed, half hid by curtains, in one corner; the dressing-table, littered with toilet things, on one side; a sofa, with a light summer gown thrown across it, on the other. It seemed as if the mistress of it all must have left years ago. A sense of helpless tragedy possessed me, such as one might feel on coming on one's home town in ruins when one had left it full of happy friends a short time before.

I turned and went down the stairs. This time I walked boldly across the hall and into the sitting-room. I went over to Mrs. Shannon, who stirred at the noise of my footfalls and sat up. "Why, Mr. Coke!" she cried. "What a start you did give me!"

"Where is Letty?" said I.

"Letty?" she repeated. "Let me see, what did become of Letty?" The old lady's hands fumbled with the cap on her head, which the chair had disarranged.

"Yes. I was to meet her here at seven-thirty."

"Oh, I remember now. Not very long ago, just before I dozed off for thirty winks, after supper, Jerry dropped in. He and Letty had a lot to say to each other, and they talked out in the dining-room for quite a spell. Then Letty put her head in at the door and said, 'I'm going out for a drive with Jerry, Ma. He'll take good care of me. Don't you sit up.' 'Out in the rain?' said I, thinking they must be crazy. But they did n't answer, and I heard the door shut. I think he had a buggy waiting."

I stared at Mrs. Shannon until she said sharply, "What's the matter? Are n't you well?"

"Oh, yes," I said dumbly; "it was n't that. I was just thinking." In fact, I was not thinking; I was simply stunned, as if some one had suddenly struck me on the head. Could it be that Letty had changed her mind? Could it be that she did not care for me, after all? I wanted to go away somewhere and sit down and think, before the sky should come crumbling down upon me.

I went out into the hall, without any other word to Mrs. Shannon, and very carefully shut the door behind me. Then I sat down on the stairs. I think that I was more in love with Letty then than I had ever been before, and I know that I was more absolutely miserable. My head was sunk in my hands, and I sat there all crouched up, as if I had no more interest in the world.

Suddenly I was angry. I raised my head, clenched my fists, and stared about me. There was nothing there but the dark and lonely hall. I got to my feet, and pulled my cap down hard on my head. I walked to the front door, and, opening it, left the house. It was raining now harder than ever.

"Wait here," I said to the negro driver, and hurried up the street to the house where Jerry boarded. I rang the bell, and when the old shoemaker opened it I asked if Jerry was at home. "I don't think he be," said the man, "but you kin run up to his room an' see."

I raced up the rickety stairs to the third floor and knocked at Jerry's door. There was no answer. I threw it open and entered. The room was empty, as lonely as a garret. I crossed to the little table in the centre. A broken pipe lay there, a bag of tobacco, and a torn paper-covered novel. On the open page of the book lay a folded square of note-paper, and, to my surprise, I read my own name on it. I picked it up and unfolded it. My eyes ran rapidly over the lines inside.

DEAR DICK:

Mebbe you 'll get this far, and ef so these here are the facts. I've run away with Letty, an' I 'm goin' to marry her. Ef I had n't she'd have gone with you, and you would n't neither one of you been happy. I know. I 've watched, an' I know. You may think I don't but I do. I know you both, an' I understand her better 'n you do, and you better 'n she does. Some day you 'll forgive me, when you 're older. Don't think hard of Letty. I made her do it. I 've been fond o' her sence she was a little gal.

Yours,

JERRY DOLLIVER

I read that note half a dozen times. Then I tore it into shreds and threw it on the floor. "You — hypocritical thief! You false friend!" I cried out loud. "If I only had you here!"

Something rubbed against my leg. I looked down and saw a yellow mongrel that Jerry had befriended. He must have been under the bed,

and have crawled out at my words. His big eyes stared up at me from their great, mournful depths. He wagged his stump of a tail slowly, as if in doubt as to how I meant to use him.

I sat down on the bed, and the dog sprawled on the floor in front of me. I tried to think clearly, to realize something of this thing that had befallen me. I thought I could see what had happened. Jerry had spied upon us, and had learned something of our plans. He was in love with Letty himself, and so had deliberately stolen her from me. I could not clearly see why Letty had gone with him, but I supposed that he must have overawed her in some fashion, must have carried things with so high a hand that there was no withstanding him. That much I thought I could make out before I again fell to cursing him in a blind fit of passion.

There was no use in following them now; there were half a dozen towns near Petersham where they might be married, they had a full hour's start of me, and Jerry would lay his plans to throw me off the track.

"By God!" I cried, jumping up. "How I hate that man!" The yellow dog's eyes met mine, as if in dumb appeal for his master. "Yes, I do," I cried. "Get out of my sight!" He crawled away, looking as if I had kicked him.

I went down-stairs and out into the street. I had no thought of what I should do next. The night had now closed in, and the rain blew slantingly full in my face. I was thoroughly sick at heart; I cared for nothing, for no one. I walked stupidly on and on, neither knowing nor caring where I went.

Sometimes I thought of Letty—of her sweet face, her smiling eyes, the little tricks of speech and gesture I had grown to love; sometimes I thought of Jerry, and now his face was saturnine and leering as the devil's; sometimes I thought of the great stretches of my own empty life, and then waves of self-pity swept across me. The world was out of joint.

How far I tramped I have no means of knowing, but it was very far. I was soaked through, my clothes and cap were sodden with the rain. Mud was splashed over me, for I paid no heed to the ponds in the road and did not care whether they proved bottomless or not. I must have expected to go on walking until my strength was gone, but for some reason I did not seem to tire. My brooding anger was a fire of great force within me.

I had left the houses of Petersham far, far behind. I was out on the open road to the west. There seemed to be more wind there, but less rain. It was a wild night, take it how one would, and that was my sole comfort.

As I crossed the open country the rain ceased, except for an

occasional spitting gust. Clouds broke up in the sky, and let the watery light of a pale and distant moon touch the earth. The sky was filled with flitting images, the broken light was ghostly, and it made of the fields and road uncanny regions speckled with light and shade like some vast checker-board. The woods ahead were black as pitch, but they seemed at least some refuge from this visible desolation. I was glad when their shadow fell across me, like the door of a prison, and the world was shut out again.

Still my legs hurried on, driven by a demon of unrest. I must have covered at least a mile in the woods when a noise caught my ear. It seemed to come from the river, which here flowed some hundred yards to the road's left. I could not make out the noise, although I stopped and listened. There were men in the woods there, down by the river. I hesitated, then plunged into the dripping underbrush and fought my way between the trees. A branch struck me in the face and swept my cap off. Briars clung to my clothes, and I must have cursed the forest a thousand times as I tore through it. I did not know what I was plunging into, but I fought my way on until I reached the high river-bank.

IX.

I SHALL never forget the scene that lay before my eyes. I was shocked into immobility, and stood staring down from a height.

The same spectral moonlight that had revealed the checkered meadows now lighted up the river. Here the stream was almost at its wildest, broad, of strong current, and broken by rocks. The moonlight brought out the stones in black relief against the silver current, giving them strange, distorted shapes, and sharpening their points into giants' teeth. Below me the bank shelved to a level, and here were gathered a crowd of figures that were horrible to see in the pale light. I knew they were men, robed in black, with the peaked black caps that gave them extra height; yet they might just as well have been demons from another world, so tall they stood, and so fantastic were their figures. I looked from them out to the river.

Several rocks led out to a large flat slab nearly in the centre of the stream. Three men were on the flat rock, and two of them were kneeling on the farther edge. They held the side of a narrow raft, two logs lashed together, perhaps ten feet long and three across. At the extreme end of the frail skiff, as far from the men as he could get, was crouched the figure of a man, bareheaded, barefooted, without a coat, his shirt torn at the throat, his ragged trousers flapping against his legs. I knew him even as my eyes lighted on him. It was Elmer Simmons.

Horror held me rooted. What was about to happen? What limit

of cruelty had these fiends devised? My teeth shook in my head, and I shivered from head to foot, but I kept my eyes on the raft. I saw now that a little flag fluttered at the bow. I saw Elmer throw up his head for a second, and caught a glimpse of his white, tormented face.

One instant the moonlight would set the scene vividly before me, the next a shifting cloud would darken the sky so that all was confused and black. Now I heard the rumble of thunder, and as I still waited several shafts of lightning split the sky. By such light the picture was doubly grawsome. So seen, it was more than ever like a glimpse from the Inferno.

A shout from the men on the rock now announced that their work was done. I saw one pick up a long pole, and, placing it against the nearer log, give the raft a shove into mid-stream. Cries of satisfaction, more like the yelping of wild beasts than human sounds, rose from the men on shore. My eyes were glued to Elmer. The shove had almost made him lose his balance; he had saved himself only by clutching desperately at the log on which he crouched. There he clung, his long, ungainly limbs distorted out of shape. He had not even a paddle to guide or balance his frail, unwieldy craft.

Murmurs rose on the shore. I caught the words, "Tell 'em about it down south," "Your ticket's punched clear through," "This'll teach you-all a lesson." Then I saw one black figure stoop and a second later send a stone whizzing toward the raft. It struck the water and sent up a shower of spray. Elmer leaned further to the other side, and threw up his right arm to shield his face.

Another roll of thunder, like the cannon of a giant's army; another piercing shaft of light, and now the raft had swung into the current and was speeding down-stream. The logs swayed from one side to the other; Elmer was sitting partly under water, bent double to make himself as small as possible.

A dozen men were throwing stones now, following along the shore, getting better aim each time. One stone hit the raft and sent its bow spinning the other way, then another struck Elmer's arm, and he dropped it to his side amid a howl of derision. Instantly he threw it up again, but too late. A stone struck the side of his head, and I saw him topple over and lie flat on the logs. Other stones followed as the raft swung on.

So far I had watched; now I could do so no longer. I plunged down from my height, ablaze with anger, mad with hate of these men. They were too busy to hear me coming. I ran down the slope and full into a tall figure standing a little distance from the rest. "You cowardly fiends!" I panted. "May God blast the lot of you!"

The figure faced me, and I had a wild desire to leap at it and tear the mocking cap with the eye-slits from its head.

"You simpleton!" said the man. "Do you want to be killed? They'll do it if you try to interfere."

"I want—" I cried, and sprang at him, my fist raised.

My blow was parried, and a swing from his left arm to my chin sent me to the ground, stunned. I lay there a long time, away from the rest of the men, who were moving down-stream. I was dizzy and sick.

Finally I came to realize that the men were gone, and that the thunder-storm had burst in all its fury. The rain had soaked me through, my head was aching, and I was full of horror. Yet as I came gradually to my full senses, one thought was uppermost. Elmer Simmons was being swept down that river, absolutely powerless to help himself. I had once struck him with deep hate in my heart. I must do my best to save him now.

I got to my feet tottering and weak. I went to the river and splashed water over my face and head until I felt better. Then I started to follow the bank of the stream downward.

To follow that twisting, twining river was no easy task in broad sunlight; now at midnight and in a gale it was well nigh hopeless. Banks, steep and slippery with wet ferns and moss, had to be climbed, rocks to be skirted, bogs to be waded through. I came to that wild, deep pool known as the Pit, and looked anxiously out at the dark rocks that broke its surface. There was no sign of Simmons or the raft. The current must have steered him safely through.

There was some small comfort in the fact that I now seemed to have the river to myself. The men had disappeared, their dastardly work done. They cared nothing what became of Elmer or of me.

I must have slipped on the rocks and moss a hundred times. My hands were bleeding, my clothes torn; I could hear the water churning in my shoes. Every minute or two I would look out to the river, and then scramble along again as best I could.

I must have gone on for at least an hour before I found what I sought. I saw Elmer lying on a rock nearly in mid-stream, his arms spread out across it as if he were trying to hold on. The raft had been twisted sideways, and now, free of its burden, was banging heavily across two other rocks that served to check its course. Elmer might have jumped to his rock or been thrown there. He lay quite still.

I went down to the water's edge. "Elmer!" I called. "Elmer Simmons!" The only answer was the faint echo of the woods about me. I measured the distance across to where the man lay. It must have been about a hundred feet. Then I threw off my water-logged coat and pulled off my heavy shoes.

I waded into the river, and soon was swimming. The current was strong, but the water was not cold, and I soon found myself nearing

Elmer's rock. Just before I reached it I tried treading water, and found a ledge of rock that I could stand on. Stepping along this, I came up to Elmer and put my hand on his shoulder. He did not stir.

I looked at him closely. His eyes were closed, but I saw that he still breathed. I put my arm about his shoulders and tried to lift him. "Elmer," I said, my mouth close to his ear. "Wake up, Elmer." I shook him sharply.

He opened his eyes and looked round at me. "Lemme alone, I'm done for. What d'ye want?"

"To get you on shore, in a house, in bed," I said. "Can you swim?"

He shook his head. "No, an' I don't want to try. Lemme alone."

I gripped his arm in my hand. "See here, Elmer, you've got to get ashore. You'll die out here. I'm going to take you, but you've got to do what I say. It is n't far to the other shore. Will you do what I tell you?"

He made no answer, and I shook him roughly. "Will you do as I say? I'm your friend."

"Go ahead," he murmured.

I put my arm about his waist and lifted him upright until his feet were on the ledge of rock. He was very weak, and I gripped him so hard I was almost afraid I might break his bones. But it was ticklish business, and if I was to get him ashore I must do it as best I could. The ledge was slippery, and several times Elmer's feet slid from under him, and I had to jerk him upright. Once he almost fell over the edge, and I had to brace myself and struggle with his weight during a moment when it seemed as if he must pull me in. But I had set my heart and soul on saving that man, and I fought hard to do it. Had he slipped into the water, I should have dived after him, regardless of the rocks.

When we came to the end of the ledge I told Elmer to hold tight to my shoulders, and started slowly swimming. Luckily it was a very short distance to the farther shore, but even so I had to turn about three times and catch him as I felt his hands slipping off my back. By swimming a few strokes and then resting and partially supporting him, we made some progress, though our heads went under water more than once. Still I fought on, throwing my whole strength into the battle, and finally I found we had reached the shelving shore and could walk. I hurried Elmer up the bank and then let him drop. I sank down beside him. I had no breath left to speak.

In time I turned to the man beside me. His eyes had closed. "Don't move, Elmer, till I come back," I said. "I'm going to look for help." He did not answer, but, confident that he could not go far, I decided to leave him.

On this side of the river the woods were not thick. I soon made my way through them, and found myself in a road. The thunder-storm was passing into an occasional rumble and distant lightning. By the light of one such flash I spied a cottage a short distance down the road.

The good farmer must have been surprised to open his window about three that morning, in answer to knocks at his door and calls for help, and find such a man as I looking up at him. I was barefooted, my trousers rolled above my knees, my shirt sticking to my body.

"Please," I begged, "give me some help. I've just pulled a man out of the river, and he's lying on the bank in a faint. He's nearly done for, and I've got to get him under cover."

"Who are you?" the man demanded.

"Richard Coke, nephew to Mr. Junius Brutus Coke."

"Humph!" grunted the man, trying to get a better view of me. My words must have sounded genuine, because after a minute he said, "Well, I'll come down."

In a few minutes he joined me in the road with a lantern. "Look here," I said, "d'you think you could have a bed ready for him, and something hot to drink? If you'll take him in for the night, I'll see you don't lose by it."

A woman had put her head out of the door and had heard this last request. "Leave them things to me, young man," she said. "You go right along, Father, and fetch him here."

I blessed her for those kind words. They seemed the first I had heard in ages.

Accompanied by the farmer, who told me his name was Jim Patterson, I went back through the woods. With the help of the lantern, we had little trouble in finding Elmer. The poor fellow had tried to curl himself up on the grass, his head in the circle of his arms. The light of the lantern fell on his face, and showed the cut, the blood, and the worn features. "Good Lord!" exclaimed Patterson. "He has been through it! I never see such a sight!"

He stooped down, and, pulling a flask from his pocket, lifted Elmer's head and poured some whiskey down his throat. It seemed to do Elmer good, for he opened his eyes and nodded his head feebly. Then he sank back against Patterson's arm.

"He's as cold as ice," said the farmer. "We've got to get him up to the house as quick as we can."

We lifted him between us, making a seat for him with our crossed hands and putting his arms about our necks. The farmer had slung his lantern over his arm, and it gave us enough light to show us the easiest way. We carried him through the woods and down the road to the farm-house. The woman met us at the door.

"Bring him right in here," she said. "I've got a bed ready."

We went through the living-room to a little bedroom at the back of the house, and put Elmer down on a cot. He gave a sigh of comfort as his weary body felt the bed under him.

Mrs. Patterson was evidently a woman specially designed to meet emergencies. She had a pitcher of something steaming hot just off the stove, and she poured at least half of it down Elmer's unresisting throat.

"Now get those clothes of his'n off and rub him good and hard, while I hunt one o' Jim's night-shirts," she commanded, as she left the room.

His clothes were nothing but rags. We got them off, although he groaned at each movement, and then we tried gently to chafe the blood back through his veins. "He had a nigh squeak that time," said Patterson as he worked over him. "It's mighty lucky you was close to hand."

A little later we had one of the farmer's night-shirts on him, and a pile of blankets for cover. He had fallen into a sort of doze, from which he woke every few minutes to mutter something and shrink back against the wall. "He must ha' been terrible frightened," said Patterson. "We'll have the doctor first thing in the mornin'."

Mrs. Patterson looked at me. "An' now, young man, what are you goin' to do? You look tuckered out yourself. How about puttin' you to bed?"

Tired as I was, I knew I could no more sleep than fly just then. I looked at myself critically. A scarecrow would have been ashamed to be seen in such clothes as mine.

"I think," I said slowly, "I'll be going home. I should n't dare go to Petersham later. There'll be no one about, and I've still got the key in my pocket." With a last word of thanks, I left the house.

Dawn was just breaking as I dragged my weary limbs into town. I was too tired to think, too tired even to be angry any longer. I struggled up Main Street, meeting no one, and, turning, found my uncle's house. I let myself in at the door. My bare feet made no sound on the polished floor as I went through the hall and up-stairs. I had just strength enough to pull off my clothes and give my wet body a few rubs with a towel before I threw myself on the bed. I fell into a sort of stupor, not sleep, but yet rest.

X.

LONG after the rest of my world was up and about I lay on my four-posted bed, numb as to thought, though not so as to feeling. I ached all over, and each time I moved it seemed as if I discovered a dozen

new muscles and nerves. But the physical outlook was not the most unpleasant one I faced. I had a disgust for the world which made me wish I might never see a human being again. My indignation at Jerry's treatment of me, my anger at Letty's faithlessness, even my hatred of the men who had treated Elmer like fiendish savages, seemed to have merged into one general loathing for my kind. I could not even think of poor Simmons with any satisfaction. The fact that he had suffered did not improve the conduct of the rest.

I twisted and turned and groaned as I lay there considering. The night of storm had given place to a mild, sunny day, and the square of blue sky that I could see through my window looked inviting. But I found myself wishing that I had never come to Petersham. I felt that I should never be contented here again. My coming to see Mr. Coke had been a miserable failure; more than that, a terrible disaster, since it had ended in my losing all my father's papers. The recollection of that disaster, almost obliterated by the events of the last twenty-four hours, brought me finally out of bed. I could lie there inactive no longer.

After a bath I felt better. I dressed slowly, to avoid any unnecessary aches. The clothes I had worn the night before, little more than rags and tatters now, I kicked into a corner. Then I went down-stairs to breakfast. I was glad to find that my uncle had already left the house, as I had no desire to talk. I rang for Sam, and ordered eggs and bacon. By the time I had finished breakfast it was half after ten o'clock.

I was standing at the window, looking out into the sunny garden and wondering whether I had not better go and see Mr. Grant about the robbery, when Sam discreetly coughed in the doorway. I turned about.

"A lady to see you, suh," said he.

"Who is she?" I asked.

"I dunno, Mr. Richard. She ain't give no name."

With a little feeling of surprise, I left the room, crossed the hall, and entered the drawing-room opposite Mr. Coke's study. Emily Burney was standing in front of the mantel-piece. She looked very pale and nervous.

I stood still, my heart thumping ridiculously. "Good morning," was all I could say.

She came forward and held out her hand to me. "I want you to help," she said. "I must have your help."

I took her hand, which was cold as ice. "What's happened now?" I asked.

"Elmer——" she began, and then hesitated. "Elmer was carried away by the Night Riders last evening, and I'm afraid he's killed."

She stood off a little from me, her tear-filled eyes fixed on my face.

"No, he's not," I said hurriedly. "He's safe now—no thanks to those men, though. I found him in the river and got him out, and he's over at Farmer Patterson's house, with Mrs. Patterson looking after him."

"You?" she exclaimed. "You found him? Oh, please, please take me to him."

"All right, I will."

We went into the hall, I picked up a cap, and we passed out the front door. She hurried down the steps, I after her, and in a minute we were heading down-street toward the country.

"Tell me," said Miss Burney, "how you found Elmer." I told her as briefly as I could my experiences of the night before. When I described how the Riders had launched the poor fellow on the raft and had thrown stones at him she stopped. "Oh," she cried, "it's too horrible to think of! Poor, poor Elmer! I did n't think there were such wretches in the world as those men!"

"How did it happen your father let you come?" I asked presently, as we went on.

"He did n't. I came without his knowing it. I left a note for him."

Now we had reached the little road that led to Farmer Patterson's house, and in a moment more we came upon the farmer himself, cutting corn near the road.

"How's the man at your house?" I called to him.

He looked me over slowly. "Did n't know ye at fust. You're diff'rent from last time I see ye. The man's up at the house. The ole woman 'll be glad to see ye."

I marched up to the house and knocked on the door. The kind-faced woman opened to us.

"How is he?" I asked eagerly.

"Oh, you're Mr. Coke," she said, scanning me closely. "He's been out o' his head most o' the time, but he's sensible now. Won't you come in?"

"This is a friend of his," turning toward Emily. "He worked for her father."

"Glad to meet you," said Mrs. Patterson. "Come right in."

As people will in a sick-room, we tiptoed across the living-room, and came to the door of Elmer's bedroom. I looked in first, and beckoned to Emily. For a moment we stood there, looking at the lank figure of Elmer. Then Emily ran to the bed and fell on her knees beside it.

"Poor, dear Elmer!" she cried. She took his right hand, that lay outside the bed-clothes, and bent and kissed it. "Do you know who I am, Elmer dear?"

His eyes opened, and I could see the wonder and then the happiness in them. His face, which had been drawn in pain, relaxed in a faint smile. "Oh, Miss Em'ly! Oh, is it you?" he whispered.

"Yes, it's I, Emily," she answered. "I've been so scared about you all night, Elmer, and I'm so glad to find you here all right."

The farmer's wife had followed us into the room, and stood looking down at the pair. "He's been sayin' 'Em'ly' over an' over while he tossed about. I reckon he's glad you've come."

Emily rose to her feet and turned to Mrs. Patterson. "He's the bravest man I know," she said. "He thought he was going to be killed last night, and so did I, and he left the house without a word. He's the sort of man martyrs are. Only, thank God, he did n't have to die!"

"T was a nigh squeak, though," said Mrs. Patterson. "Another ten minutes in the river would ha' finished him. When these two come in here last night, they was both nearly done for."

Emily flashed a look at me that sent hot blood to my cheeks. She turned again to Mrs. Patterson. "Will you keep him here for a few days? I don't think we could move him safely now."

"Here he stays till he says the word," answered the good woman. "He needs nursin' an' food an' quiet. I al'ays had a hankerin' to be a nurse. There ain't no bones broken nor no illness; it's just a case for a woman to look arter."

"I wish I could stay and help," said Emily. "Might I have a chair, and would you let me talk to him a little while alone?"

I brought in a chair and placed it by the bed. I could see that Emily was fairly shaking with fatigue. Then Mrs. Patterson and I left them together, closing the door behind us.

I went out and sat on a bench in front of the house, while she resumed her household duties. Presently Emily came out.

"Sit here a few minutes," I begged. "It will do you good."

"I ought to be going home," she answered. "Father will be worried."

"Just a few minutes," I urged. "You ought to rest."

She sat down beside me, and leaned her head back against the side of the house. "Elmer knows what you did for him last night," she said. "He could n't say much, but I saw that he knew. I'm so glad."

A moment later she jumped to her feet and stood before me, her cheeks ablaze with excitement. "Come!" she cried. "Father'll need help with the paper, and I know he'll be more than ever anxious now to have it out on time."

Excitement is the most wonderful tonic in the world. Emily walked down the road from the Pattersons' cottage as if she had rested well all night. I went with her, marvelling at her, and perfectly content.

But such strength as that is based on sham, and by the time we had struck into the post-road that ran from Petersham to Happy Valley Emily had turned pale again, and her steps had begun to falter.

"Here's a place in the shade," I said, pointing out a grassy spot under a maple. "We'll wait until a wagon goes by and then we'll beg a ride."

We sat down under the maple and waited. No one but ourselves seemed to be using the highway that morning. The noon sun had grown very warm, and a patch of red clover had drawn the drowsy buzz of bees to us. Emily leaned back against the trunk of the tree, and in a few minutes her eyelids closed, and presently she was asleep. I sat on guard, keeping ants from crawling on her skirt, and gnats from buzzing about her face. Once or twice I thought of Letty, but the memory seemed immeasurably far away.

After a time a cart, half filled with hay, came creaking down the road. Emily did not stir. I rose silently, and went over to speak to the driver. He was an old, weather-beaten farmer, with a rimless straw hat, pumpkin yellow, jammed down on his head, and a corncob pipe in his mouth. I offered him half a dollar to take the two of us to the *Clarion* office. He agreed, and sat stolidly in the road, chewing the stem of his pipe, while I went to wake Emily.

I hated to do it, she looked so very comfortable. I called her name three times before her eyes opened. Then she laughed and jumped up. "I'm sorry, but I could n't help it."

I made her comfortable in the straw, tucking my coat under her head for a pillow, and bade the farmer drive on. In two minutes Emily was asleep again. I, much more comfortable without a coat, chewed a straw, and pondered the many turns and twists in my affairs.

After a leisurely journey we finally reached the Valley, and drew rein before John Burney's door. Again I waked Emily. She jumped lightly from the wheel of the cart to the ground, and ran into the house. I paid the farmer, and saw him drive slowly on. Then I followed Emily indoors.

There was a Sunday calm about the front part of the Burneys' house. I went through the court and entered the printing-office. Mr. Burney was standing near his desk, his daughter in his arms.

Gently he disengaged her clasp, and held out his hand to me. "I understand you saved Elmer's life," he said. "I thank God you were near when he needed you!"

I went forward slowly and took his hand. His magnificent gray eyes seemed to read my very soul. There was something leonine in his bearing. I knew I was facing one of the world's great men.

"We've come on evil days," said he slowly. "We must think, must think hard. They got Elmer, and they thought to frighten me.

The next time they come, it will be for worse work. I know them, and what I've to expect. Emily, dearest child, you must go away."

I looked at her. She shook her head slowly. "And leave you here, Daddy? You can't ask me to do such a thing as that?"

"Yet if I go on with the *Clarion*, who knows what may happen to us both, dear heart? Would you have me give that up?"

"Never!" she cried, standing up quickly. "Daddy, don't you be afraid for me. You know it would break my heart if I thought you'd given this up for me. Don't make me go away. Let me stay and help."

I did not see how any man could resist the appeal in her face. John Burney stood looking at her for a moment, then turned to me.

"I think it's past argument, Mr. Burney," said I. "Emily intends to stay with you. You both intend to print the *Clarion*. I'm going back to Petersham to speak my feelings, and I've faith there are almost as many decent people there as there are bad."

"Mind you, Richard Coke," he said, "I don't mind a fight. It's only Emily I'm fearful for."

"Yes, I understand that, sir," I answered. "But I guess we've got to take her, now she's here."

That may not have been gallant, but it made Emily laugh, and so brought us back to present facts.

"There's one thing, at least, that Emily can do," she exclaimed, "and that is to get some food for two starving men. Father, finish your writing. Richard, come with me while I look into the larder."

Mr. Burney smiled. "You see, Richard Coke, the truth of the old saying, 'Man proposes, woman disposes.' We're both in Emily's hands."

I followed her to the kitchen, and tried to do as she bade me with the pots and pans. We both tried to show good spirits, but not with much success, for Emily was utterly tired out, and I was beginning to realize something of what might lie before John Burney's house.

XI.

SHORTLY after dinner I left the Burneys' house. I did not go direct to Petersham. Instead, I walked down the single street of Happy Valley, looking for the blacksmith's shop. I suppose, all told, there were some thirty families in the Valley, but their homes, widely separated as they were, covered a long stretch of road. Finally I came to the blacksmith's shop, which bore a striking sign, with the name "Job Trainer" surrounded by a wreath of horse-shoes. I could hear the ring of blows on the anvil before I came to the open door. Inside, I saw a giant of a man at work.

I went in and walked over to the anvil. The smith continued his blows a moment, then, resting his hammer, he wiped his hand across his mouth, as if preparatory to speech. I could see that he thought slowly.

"Mr. Trainer," said I, "I'm a friend of the Burneys. It looks to me as if they were going to have a lot of trouble. They're going to need friends more than ever just now. How do you feel toward them?"

Slowly the man rubbed his great brawny hand across his leather apron. His eyes were fixed on me with a deep stare.

"Miss Em'ly nursed my little gal last winter when she was mighty sick. I ain't got nothin' agin Miss Em'ly."

"And John Burney?" I suggested. "Surely you have n't anything against him?"

Trainer scratched his head thoughtfully. "Burney's a man," he said slowly. "There be no denyin' that. There ain't a streak o' chicken-meat in him."

"Then——" I began, but found that Trainer had more to say, and meant to say it.

"I don't like his paper. I don't see's how he's got a right to print things that makes trouble. 'T ain't my business if the laws are broken, nor your'n, nor yet his'n. It's the lawyers' business, or them that is paid to see the gover'ment run. That's the way I see it. I'm a peaceful man, an' I ain't got no use for them as wants to stir up trouble."

That made my work considerably more difficult. I had to think over my case before I could start again. Meanwhile, his bovine stare remained on me.

"Last night," I recommenced abruptly, "some of those men, those Night Riders who dress up in masks and cloaks, came out from Petersham, caught Elmer Simmons, set him adrift on a couple of logs in the river, and nearly killed him. It was n't their fault they did n't. The next time they may take one of the Burneys. Miss Emily is n't a coward——"

"Coward?" interrupted the blacksmith, in his ponderous manner. "I seen her bind up a dog's leg no one else'd go nigh 'cause they thought he was mad. I helped her hold him, but I was skeered myself."

"She's no coward," I continued, "and they won't get her father without reckoning with her. But what can the two of them do against a score?"

Trainer continued his silent stare for a full minute, then he slowly shook his head. "In a fight I be always with the under dog," he announced.

I took hope. "If they come—if the Riders come out here to

Happy Valley—will you stand by the Burneys?" I asked, trying to keep my eagerness out of my voice.

"I won't see 'em come to harm," he said finally, "ef I kin help 'em. Though, mark ye, I don't approve o' this paper business. Let the laws take keer o' themselves."

"Good!" I cried. "That sounds like the man Miss Emily said you were. Do you think any of the neighborhood will stand with you in this?"

The faintest ghost of a smile flitted across Trainer's broad face. "Ef them fellers come up here an' opens fire on Burney, I reckon a few would n't mind so much joinin' in the game, jest to make things even."

"Then I leave them to you," I said. "All John Burney wants is a fair field."

"He be entitled to that," said the smith gravely, "same as the rest of us."

"Good-by, Mr. Trainer."

"Good-by, young man."

I walked out of the smithy, feeling much relieved. When I stepped outside I glanced back. The smith had again lifted his heavy hammer to his shoulder. He made a fine figure so, a martial figure, with the hammer reminiscent of a battle-axe.

I tramped back the road, more than ever conscious of the extreme tranquillity of everything about me. It was that hour of mid-afternoon when a country village seems to have settled for a nap. A reaping machine whirred evenly in the distance, like the buzz of a drowsy giant bee. I had almost to make an effort to remember that the forty-eight hours had twisted my fortunes almost out of recognition. I had lost my father's papers and part at least of my inheritance, I had lost the girl I was to marry, I had saved a man's life, and had taken up the broken threads of friendship with Emily Burney. That was quite enough to make me thoughtful.

It was nearly sunset when I reached the broad thoroughfare where Petersham transacted business. Scarcely knowing whither my steps tended, I walked down the street and stopped before Mr. Grant's door. I could see from the window that he was in, and apparently unoccupied, so I entered.

Somewhat to my surprise, the lawyer was bending over some old daguerreotypes which lay on his desk. He glanced up as I entered, and I noticed that his eyes seemed somewhat far-away and dreamy.

"*Absit omen!*" he exclaimed, and put up his hand to remove his gold-rimmed eye-glasses and wipe them on a large silk handkerchief. "Come in, Mr. Richard. You come at a good hour. I was looking at some pictures of your father."

I crossed to the table, and stood at his side, looking down at the old daguerreotypes that lay before him. One was of a boy of about sixteen, the other of a young man of twenty-one or thereabouts. I knew both pictures. They had been in my mother's room at Marblehead.

"Your father," said Mr. Grant, replacing his glasses. "As happy-tempered, gallant, and lovable a youth as ever I knew. How well I remember when he grew his first mustache—very becoming it was, too, and made him the envy of all the rest of us boys, whose hair was like pig's bristles. But we weren't envious; it seemed only right that everything about Robert Coke should be good-looking. And your mother. Dear me, I don't believe there ever were two people in Petersham so happy before or since! Bring up a chair, Mr. Richard, and sit down."

I drew a chair close up to the table. Mr. Grant smiled at me rather apologetically.

"I was doing a singular thing when you came in, sir," said he. "I was talking to your father's picture. I was putting questions to him, and trying to catch his answers. Oh, I was very much in earnest, although it does sound strange! Much depends on the answers I read there."

He leaned back in his swinging chair, and for a few moments his eyes were as lost in thought as they had been when I entered. Then he sat up straight, and his hand reached to the desk and touched the other picture.

"Your uncle Junius," he said, and bent over the two pictures. I did likewise, much interested.

"Junius," Mr. Grant said, "was so absolutely different from Robert. He was our High School orator, he was apt at winning prizes, older people always predicted that he would have a great career. Look at the eyes and the mouth. Every one understood Robert and loved him, because he was so easy to understand. I doubt if any one thoroughly understood Junius, and I know many were afraid of him because of his air of secrecy."

"I know," I said. "I often feel it now."

"Yes," Mr. Grant answered. "Very likely. I've been looking at him, too, this afternoon, and trying to make him talk, but he won't say much. Robert was easier. I think I understand him now."

He closed the cases gently. "This has been a serious afternoon for me. I have had to decide a very important matter." His eyes rested on me a moment, and then he smiled. "I feel I've decided right."

There followed a silence, which I was the first to break. "Excuse my interrupting," said I, "but I wondered if you'd learned anything about my papers."

"It's scarcely an interruption," he murmured. He swung back, facing his desk. "I think I may say that I'm on the track of them, Mr. Richard. You must give me a few days more before I make you my report."

His words gave me great cheer. "Oh, as long as you wish, sir," I hastened to reply. "My uncle is moving slowly. I'm so glad to hear you think there's a chance of my recovering them."

"A very good chance. Meanwhile, not a word to any one of what I'm doing. You understand."

"I understand." I rose. "Thank you so much, sir. You were a friend of my father. I'm sure he would thank you, too."

Mr. Grant had risen, and stood now with his hand resting on the cases. "I believe you're right," he said. "That was what I had just gathered from my talk with him."

I was somewhat mystified, but Mr. Grant added nothing to enlighten me. He was still standing so, half-smiling at me, when I left his office.

XII.

A FEW days later Mr. Burney called at Farmer Patterson's and took Elmer home with him. I heard that the Riders had had another meeting, and anxiety drove me out to the Valley the next morning.

Ten o'clock found me, dismounted from my horse, standing in front of Job Trainer's smithy. The great doors were wide open, the huge anvil stood like an enormous tree-trunk square in its place, but the smith was not to be seen. I pulled the iron ring outside the door, and the bell jangled loudly. A moment more, and Trainer appeared at the little door that led from his shop to his house.

"Morning, Mr. Trainer," said I.

"Mornin', sir," said he. I thought he looked rather strange, as if he had not yet got into his day's harness.

"Open for business to-day?" I asked at a venture.

He came slowly forward, and finally half sat, half leaned, upon the anvil, his brawny arms, which I think he must rarely, if ever, have covered with shirt-sleeves, folded across his chest.

"I'm a poor crittur," he announced solemnly, "an' I know it to the bottom of me boots. But I am thankful this mornin', rightly thankful, sir, an' I say as how she's come over me like with a ton o' bricks."

"Who?" I asked. "Mrs. Trainer?"

"No; Miss Em'ly."

I stared at him. "What's she been doing?"

He wiped his face with the flat of his great arm, more from habit than anything else.

"Last night my little Annie got the croup," he resumed in the same

solemn manner. "Her ma's been poorly some time, an' a-bed for a week. She could n't do nothin' for Annie. The Doc he come, an' he shook his head, an' sent me out for some med'cine. I knew she was goin' to die, for I ain't been a very good man, an' I could jest nat'rally feel it." Again he wiped his forehead with his arm. "I went down to the store, an' got the stuff, an' come on back, an' I reckon I sorter stumbled like, for I wa' n't feelin' good. Prutty soon I heard some one say, 'What's the matter with you, Mr. Trainer?' I looks up, an' there was Miss Em'ly. 'Annie's got the croup,' says I, 'an' she's mighty bad.' 'Can't I help?' says she. 'Let me go along with you.' 'I've been a bad man, Miss Em'ly,' says I, 'an' her ma's sick in bed, an' I dunno what to do.' 'I know what,' says she, and she walked along with me, and come into the house. Poor li'l' Annie was havin' a hard time, an' the Doc was shakin' his head. He give her the stuff from the store, but it did n't do much good. Then Miss Em'ly, she tuk charge, an' she sat there with little Annie all night."

I waited a minute. "Is she better now?" I asked.

"She be," he answered. "Miss Em'ly held her tight, nussed her all night long, an' she pulled little Annie through." Again he wiped his forehead. "I'm a thankful man this day, sir, an' I hope a diff'rent one."

"Has Miss Emily gone home yet?"

"She's just gone. Annie's sleepin' quiet."

There followed a pause which I broke abruptly. "Mr. Trainer, Miss Emily and her father are going to have a lot of trouble. Those men, the Night Riders, are coming out here to destroy the *Clarion* press, unless Mr. Burney stops his paper, and that I know he won't do. There's going to be trouble then, and I should n't wonder if they tried to burn his house down over his head. They're going to need help badly."

The smith's big blue eyes were lighted with slow fire as they looked at me. "I'd stand afore her through hell fire," said he slowly. "P'r'aps you don't know what little Annie is to me."

And before his fixed gaze my own eyes had to drop.

Talk about comfort! I got more actual satisfaction out of those few words of Job Trainer's, and the way in which he said them, than in anything else I had known for weeks. He looked a big enough bulwark to protect anybody from anything as he leaned against the anvil. I said a few more words, and left the smithy, carrying with me a very vivid impression of Trainer's thankful and almost reverent face.

I walked my horse back to the post before the *Clarion* office, and tied him there. I knew that Emily would be sleeping after her all-night vigil, and, fearful of disturbing her in any way, I crept around

the house and came to the printing-office by a side-door. I found Mr. Burney seated at his desk, and Elmer making cuttings from newspapers at his table in the opposite corner.

I thought Mr. Burney's face looked more than usually serious, and almost careworn, as he sat at his desk, but his eyes seemed to brighten as they lighted on me. He held out his hand, and I took it in a warm clasp.

"Good morning to you, sir. Good morning, Elmer," said I.

Elmer showed his teeth in a dry sort of smile and gave me "Good morning." I rested my arm on the top of Mr. Burney's roll-top desk, and looked intently at him. As I looked, all my old respect and admiration and pure fondness for him welled up within me. He seemed so simple and so true and so fearless.

His voice had sunk almost to a whisper. "They are coming out here, Richard, to destroy my press. They know if they can do that they can silence me. They will come out here and take it, and God knows what they will do with it—most likely drop it in the river."

"Unless you give up the paper," I added.

"Unless I give up the paper—and that would be the same as losing the press. They sent me word at dawn to-day."

"And of course you will go on?" I said.

"Yes. It may seem strange to some, but I must go on. Duty is rarely a word that sounds well in men's ears, and when duty means constant struggle, misunderstandings, perils, it's a hard and bitter word. Yet, if it should come to that, Richard, I know that I would give up everything to do what I know, beyond all argument or doubt, is my work."

We looked at each other in silence a short space of time.

"You're not alone in this," I said finally. "There are men in Petersham who think as you do. I'm going to prepare them for this fight. There must be some here in the valley, too. I know one—Job Trainer. I've just seen him, and he'll stand by us to the end. And when the next *Clarion* appears, he and I'll help deliver it. There'll be no harm in showing that you've recruits who are n't afraid to show themselves."

"Thank you," Mr. Burney answered. "I hate to draw you into this, and yet I know it's right."

"And I also," I answered.

We shook hands again, with a certain sense of performing a formal rite. As I left the room, I glanced at Elmer. He sat hunched up on his high stool, his eyes fastened hungrily on John Burney's face, his whole expression full of mute adoration.

My heart was singing high as I left the printing-office, for my talk with Trainer and with Mr. Burney had nerved me. Yet there was

one thing more I wanted. That, however, I did not expect to have, for I knew that Emily must be sound asleep. Fortune was kind to me. As I untied my horse in front of the house, I heard a window raised, and, looking about, I saw Emily at her window in the second story. I took off my hat and waved it to her. She leaned out and beckoned to me.

"You've been to see Father?" she asked.

"Yes, I've just left him. And I've seen Job Trainer, too. He told me of a certain person who'd been at his house all night."

Emily flushed. "It was nothing. I've always been fond of little Annie. She's a darling."

"Trainer is with us now, hand and foot, bound and delivered. And, by the way, I'm coming out every day."

"Why?" she asked.

"Oh, well, I think I'm needed." I hesitated. She looked lovely, her soft, red-brown hair loosely knotted, and her eyes very bright. "Emily, I want to have a long talk with you soon. I've a lot of things I want to say."

Emily laughed. "You're always telling me that, and then, when you have the chance, you're quite speechless. Tell me now."

I shook my head. "Not this way. I'm no Romeo."

"Very well, then; ride on—to glory. Wait one moment, though." She disappeared from the window, and a second later reappeared and dropped a great red rose down into my hands. I looked up at her face, and found her smile more tantalizing than ever.

"What does this mean?" I asked.

"That I'm happy, and want every one else to be so, too. If the rose will give you pleasure—"

"It does—a great deal." I fastened it in my coat, and looked up again. "I wish, Emily, that you'd come down a moment."

She shook her head. "I've lots of work to do, and I know how it would be. I don't dare. This is a workaday world, Mr. Richard Coke."

"It's not!" I cried. "It's the most beautiful, wonderful world out here." But the window was shutting, and I was left to cry my rapturous exclamations to the empty air.

I had work to do as soon as I reached Petersham. This was Tuesday noon, the *Clarion* would make its appearance on Thursday, and the Night Riders' attack would probably follow at once. I had only a day or two in which to see what I could do to raise recruits.

There were certain men who I knew would help, men I had heard speak vigorously on behalf of Burney and his stand. There were perhaps half-a-dozen of them. Now I hunted them out, and, having made my assurance of their position doubly sure by a little preliminary

feeling about, I told them the exact state of affairs. I told them that probably Thursday night the Riders would go to Burney's house to destroy his press, that he intended to fight for his property, and that if we were unwilling to let this lawless band rule the country, we must stand beside John Burney. We must have horses and guns. I need not have added that—every man to whom I spoke had a horse and a gun. I need scarcely have tried to raise their fighting spirit; that was latent in every mother's son, and not far beneath the surface either.

With the aid of six stanch adherents, I did considerable proselytizing, and by Wednesday night had the satisfaction of knowing that the town was divided against itself. I had reason to fear that the great majority of people were opposed to Mr. Burney, but I knew that many of them, on account of age and a natural indisposition to take an active hand in anything, would content themselves with voicing their opinions from their porches, while I knew that those who now stood with me would take the field at the first call to arms.

Late Wednesday afternoon I dropped into Mr. Grant's office for a little chat. He had given me much good advice during the past few days, and I had fallen into the habit of reporting to him at frequent intervals. I had the good luck to find him in his room. He closed the book he was reading with a bang, almost as if he were glad that I had interrupted him. "How's it going, Richard?" said he, with a smile wrinkling the corners of his eyes.

"Time's growing short," I answered. "The *Clarion* 'll be out to-morrow, and then we 'll see what we shall see."

"Is Junius in his office?" he asked, somewhat abruptly changing the subject.

"No, he went over to Westboro to-day," said I, naming a neighboring town where my uncle had some clients.

"Will he be back to supper?"

"No; he said he would n't be home till late."

"I'd like to go over to your house with you, Richard. There are one or two little points about the robbery I want to try to clear up."

We left the office and walked to my uncle's house. Again Mr. Grant fell into a reminiscent vein and talked to me a great deal about my father and of how fond he had been of him.

The old house was cool and quiet when we entered it. I took Mr. Grant up to my room, and he looked about him with interest. Then I showed him how easily a man might jump from the window to the roof of the bay-window, and so, by means of the trellis, to the ground.

"When the man escaped by the window you followed him," said the lawyer, "but when you reached the garden he had disappeared?"

"Yes."

"Did you look next day for foot-prints?"

"Yes, but there were none. The brick walk runs along by the house and out to the servants' gate at the right. The thief must have stuck to that."

"And then you climbed back, and walked down the hall to your uncle's room, went in there, and found him in bed, sound asleep?"

"Yes, that was the way of it," I agreed.

"Will you show me Junius's room?"

I led the way down the hall to the other side of the house, and pushed open my uncle's door. The room was scrupulously neat; it might have been specially prepared for our inspection. Mr. Grant walked carefully about it, glancing at the pictures and the quaint, old-fashioned furniture. "A beautiful highboy," said he, stopping before a tall, dark mahogany piece, with brass handles that shone like gold. "And a magnificent wardrobe," he added, passing on to the next piece of furniture. "How roomy these things are!" He turned the key in the lock and threw open the door. Then, after a moment's hesitation, he put his hand into the wardrobe and pushed the clothes that were hanging there right and left. "Everything as neat as if a woman had cared for them," he said finally, and closed the door. Then he passed on about the room, and in the course of his admiring tour he opened two closets and looked through the contents. He seemed very much interested in everything belonging to my uncle.

"And now, Richard, I should like to go out to the garden," he said, when he had completed his round.

I took him out by the door at the rear of the entrance hall. We stood on the brick path that led from the back of the house to the gate into the side street, which was the servants' entrance. Mr. Grant glanced across the flower-beds to the little summer-house, and then took a careful survey of the rest of the garden.

"What's that little shack down along this brick walk?" he asked, pointing to a small wooden building on our right.

"Oh, that's an old shed where they keep the garden things, ash-barrels, and such like," I answered.

He walked down toward it and opened the door. I followed him into the shed, which was quite roomy. In one corner leaned a lot of garden tools, near by was a great coil of hose, beyond were boxes and barrels filled with rubbish waiting to be carted away. Mr. Grant walked over to a ladder that stood against the wall. "Ten feet high, I judge," he speculated. Then he put his head out of the shed door and looked toward the house. "That ladder would just about reach to the second-story windows of the house," he remarked. "I don't suppose this shed is ever locked."

"Oh, no; there's nothing of any value here."

He turned back toward the ladder.

"The thief would n't have needed a ladder, though," I added. "The bay-window roof under my window and the trellis would be quite enough."

"Yes, yes, quite enough," he agreed, somewhat absently.

I watched him prowl about the shed, dipping his fingers into boxes of rubbish, kicking an old tin bucket that was full of scrap iron, and I wondered what it was he had in mind. At last, as he leaned over a barrel in a far corner, I heard him give a little whistle. I stepped nearer. He was pulling what seemed to be old clothes out of the barrel, first a black coat, then some moth-eaten trousers, then a long garment that was folded inside out. He threw the coat and trousers on the shed floor, and brought the last garment out to the light. He unwrapped it and turned it about. It was an old and soiled flowered dressing-gown.

Giving me this to hold, Mr. Grant put his hand in his pocket, drew out a wallet, and, opening it, took a scrap of cloth from it. He laid this scrap on the cloth I held. It matched exactly. Then I understood. The man who had stolen my papers had worn a dressing-gown, and in some way the gown had found its way into the bottom of this rubbish barrel in the shed.

"There, Richard, do you see?" said Mr. Grant.

I nodded my head. "It's very curious," was all I could find to say.

He turned the gown over and fitted the scrap to the arm from which it had been torn. Then, without more words, he made a bundle of the gown and led the way out of the shed.

"Now, Richard," said he, when we stood outside, "I have all I want. I'm going to take this with me, and I'm going out the servants' gate. Keep mum about all this. You'll hear from me very soon. Meantime, not a word to any one."

I nodded. A minute later he had shut the gate behind him.

I walked back to the house, and sat down in my uncle's study. The portrait of Henry Clay, right arm nobly extended, looked down upon me. I sunk my head in my hands, and stared at the floor.

XIII.

THURSDAY came, and while the lark was still singing his welcome to the dawn I was covering the road from Petersham to Happy Valley. In the printing-office I found Emily, her father, and Elmer. The latter had charge of the press, and already a great white pile of papers lay stacked upon the table. Emily was folding the sheets as they fell from the press, and John Burney was running his eye down the columns on the first page of a copy.

"Well, I see it's out," I said, taking in the scene before me.

"Yes," said Mr. Burney, and, stepping over to me, handed me the copy he had been reading. I saw staring at me an account of all the events of the past week, including word for word the message that the Riders had sent to Mr. Burney.

"People shall know the truth," said John Burney. "Then let them decide between us."

"Good!" I agreed. "I heard last night that the men who deliver the paper for you had refused to work for you any longer. Is that so?"

"Yes, I'm sorry to say it is. I'll have to deliver it myself."

"I've a better plan than that. Let me do it. I think Job Trainer will help me. They might do you a mischief, but Trainer and I are n't so well known."

Mr. Burney looked rather dubious. "If there's danger, I ought to run it," said he.

"I think there's quite enough danger in staying right here," I answered. "If the *Clarion*'s going to make another appearance, the editor must n't run unnecessary risks."

"If the *Clarion* is to make another appearance," he repeated musingly. "I pray God that my work may not go for naught."

"Then that's settled," I said, after a moment. Mr. Burney said nothing, but I knew that he had agreed.

A serious air had come over the room, and to lighten it I stepped to Emily's side. She welcomed me with a smile.

"Can't I help?" I asked.

She pushed some of the sheets toward me. "It seems to me you're helping us a great deal," she said.

I caught Elmer's eyes upon me, and something in them made me check the rising tide of speech. I picked up the papers and began to fold them as she did, but I could not keep my eyes from her slim, pretty fingers nor from her soft, sun-brownèd arms.

Slowly the press ground through its work, and the damp pages dropped on the long table in front of us. Elmer, himself almost as mechanical now as the press, fed in the untouched sheets. Emily and I seized the printed ones and silently turned and creased them. Mr. Burney had gone to his desk, and was writing letters. We were all a little startled at a sudden knock at the door which opened into the yard.

"Come in," called Mr. Burney.

The door was pushed open, and Job Trainer, looking bigger than ever, it seemed to me, stood there. In his arms he held a large water-melon. He pulled his hat from his head. "I heered Miss Em'ly tellin' little Annie how much she keered for melons," he remarked, "so I brung her one. It oughter be good by the soundin', but melons is tricky things."

"Thank you very much," said Emily. "It looks like a beauty. Won't you set it down?"

Thereupon Trainer advanced into the room and placed the melon on a chair. "Is that the new paper?" he asked, looking at the press.

"Yes," said Emily. "Would you like one?"

"I ain't much of a reader," he answered, eying with some misgiving the copy she held out to him. "But I'll take it back to the shop and have it layin' round when folks stop in—jest to show where I stand in this here matter."

He folded the paper and stuffed it into his trousers pocket. Then he gave a tentative little cough. "Ain't there anythin' else I can do to help you folks along?"

I looked up quickly. "Will you help me deliver these papers, Mr. Trainer? The regular men have quit, and I don't know how Mr. Burney'll get them taken to Petersham unless you and I lend a hand. It is n't hard work, but we may get called hard names."

"Hard names don't break no bones," said the blacksmith, with a slow smile. He glanced at Emily, who had bent again to her work. "I reckon you folks need me more'n the shop does to-day. I'm your man for the papers."

"Thank you ever so much, Mr. Trainer!" said Emily quickly; and I could see from his eyes that the smile which went with her words had paid him a thousandfold for the work he had offered to do.

"I'll stop for you at the shop," I said, "as soon as we've got the papers into the wagon. I don't think there'll be any trouble, but you might stick a pistol in your pocket, if you've got one lying around loose."

Trainer nodded. "I kin keer for that," said he. "Mornin' to you all," and he turned and left the room, closing the door quietly behind him.

I found Emily standing close beside me, her hand resting ever so lightly on my arm. "Dick, have you a revolver with you?" she whispered.

"Yes; I've been carrying it now for over two weeks."

"Oh, do be careful, please," she went on. "It's terrible to think that any of you may be hurt."

"Was n't Elmer hurt?" I asked, looking across at him, as he stood half hidden by the press.

"Yes, he was, and I'm so afraid the troubles have n't stopped there."

Perhaps I took unfair advantage of her alarm. I could not help myself. I put my hand on hers. "I'm almost glad you're afraid," I whispered, trusting to the noise of the press to hide my words. "Emily, some day I've a lot to tell you!"

The color stormed her cheeks, her lashes hid her eyes from me, but for a moment we stood so, and I could feel my pulses beating almost louder than the press. Then she gently drew her hand away from mine, and, moving to a little distance, picked up the newly printed sheets and folded them. I went on working blunderingly. It seemed to me that I could see nothing, think of nothing, but that dear figure just beyond my reach.

In some fashion that week's *Clarion* got itself printed, folded, and stacked. By the time the papers were tied in convenient bundles, Elmer had brought the delivery wagon to the door. We all helped carry the papers and pile them in the wagon. Mr. Burney had given me a list of the people to whom the copies were to be distributed by hand. He and Elmer took charge of the mailing-list.

With a few last words of advice and warning, I mounted the driver's seat and drove down the road. I called back to Elmer to put my own horse in the stable. When I pulled up before the smithy, I found Job Trainer waiting for me at the door. He climbed to the seat beside me and folded his arms across his chest. I think his mere physical presence would have given me courage enough to drive through a hostile army.

We had little to say to each other as we took up our progress toward town. The wagon was heavy and jolted over the road, throwing the piles of the *Clarion* on top of one another. The two horses were neither young nor frisky. Trainer and I were each busied with his own thoughts.

As we neared Petersham, we began to find ourselves objects of interest. The news of the Night Riders' threat had probably spread to every farm-house in the county, and here now, in our loaded wagon, was the visible answer John Burney was making to the threat. Farmers stopped work to gaze at the big wagon as it rumbled along the road, and whenever we threw one of the folded papers on the porch of a subscriber it was eagerly seized upon by all the grown members of the family. The fact that Trainer and I were delivering the paper, instead of the regular men, also caused comment. Some men simply grinned, more nodded encouragement, and a few scowled upon us. To all this Job presented a perfect immobility, sitting like a man of stone, occupied with thoughts far too deep to be concerned by what these men might think. I tried to imitate him, but with small success, for my cheeks would flush or pale as we passed different men, and I was continually on the lookout for a stone or something more dangerous.

As we came to the road that led to the quarry, we met a man on horseback, who I was sure was one of the Riders. He had an evil look in his eyes as he neared us and drew rein. I expected trouble.

"What you got there?" he demanded.

I was for driving on without making any reply, but Job put his right hand on the reins and stopped our horses. "This be a load of to-day's *Clarion*, hot from the press. Would yer like to buy a copy, Mister?" said he, in his deep voice.

The rider's scowl grew. "I did n't think there was two men in the country would peddle Burney's vile stuff," he declared.

Job looked ahead of him down the road and clucked to the horses. "There's some men grows wiser every day they lives," said he. "I reckon you don't keer to buy a copy. G'lang." This last to the horses.

The other put his hand to his hip pocket, and my own hand flew to mine. But the rider changed his mind. So we drove past him, majestically unruffled, and heard his horse canter on along the road.

Presently we came into Petersham. We started with the outlying streets and made their circuit. I gave the reins to Job, and myself delivered the papers, jumping down from the wagon and handing them in at the door or stuffing them into mail-boxes. Our work was done quietly and quickly. We caused no particular comment until we came near the centre of Main Street, where were gathered the Court House, the post-office, and all the chief stores.

Like a breath in the wheat, a whisper of our coming must have spread through the heart of the town. As we slowed up before the post-office, windows were raised, doors opened, and in the twinkling of an eye the drowsy square was full of animation. Cyrus Robbins, the postmaster, himself came out to the wagon, and took his bundle of copies from my hands. A dozen small boys, mysteriously freed from school, danced about our horses or stood on tiptoe on the pavement, trying to look into the wagon. A woman hanging out of a second-story window opposite the post-office, her head bound with a dusting cloth, gave voice to her thoughts. "Hooray for Burney an' the *Clarion!*" she shrilled. "Hey, son, bring me a copy."

That seemed to break the ice of suspense that had held the square. Some voices answered her back. I heard one deep bass cry, "The —— preacher's made trouble enough!" and another remark, "Ole man Coke's family cert'nly hev run to seed;" which, of course, was meant for my ears, but in another minute I was too busy selling papers to the crowd of men and women who surged about us to listen to such comments. Some smiled as they bought their *Clarions*, some scowled and muttered, but nevertheless bought, doubtless out of curiosity. A few asked open questions.

"Say, sonny," said an old man as he handed me his pennies, "who's the giant you got sittin' there to holt your horses?"

Before I could answer another had spoken: "Why, don't you know him? That's blacksmith Trainer, over to the Valley. Don't he look like a cigar Injun, though?"

I glanced at Job. He sat bolt upright, rigid of face and figure, not unlike the statues that grace some tobacco-shops. He did not smile, nor even look about him. I think he imagined he represented the majesty of the law.

A few men, gathered together in front of the Court House, looked as if they would like to rough-handle us. They sent emissaries here and there among the people, saying bitter things. I was called a "scab," a trouble-breeder; the *Clarion* was called vile names without number. Finally a young fellow with coal black hair and eyes and a yellow skin edged up near to us and broke loose with a string of low epithets aimed at John Burney. I felt rather than saw Job Trainer stiffen. He stood up. "Would you mind repeatin' them words, young man?" said he.

Instant silence fell. The young man flushed. "What's that got to do with you?" he said guardedly. Then he gained courage. "I've got a right to speak my mind, and if I think that Burney's a sneak an' a liar, I've got a right to say so."

Trainer was on the ground, in front of the horses, just before the speaker. He looked very big and calm. "You kin say what you like to yourself, but not to me. Mr. Burney's as honest a man as the Lord ever made, an' you're the liar."

They looked at each other a moment, and then some of the youth's friends helped him out. One man called, "We'll show Burney what we think of him all right, all right!" and another chimed in: "Don't take much rope to hang a lot o' scamps."

Trainer looked around at the last speaker, and when he turned back the young man had slipped among his friends on the sidewalk. The blacksmith smiled grimly. "Some men was made fer kindlin' wood," said he, "an' I reckon that's all they're good fer."

He climbed back to his seat on the wagon. For a moment I felt that the issue hung in doubt. I could see that young man's face, and it was very black. The men crowded about him looked black, too. The scales balanced as to whether they would try to rush us out of town or not.

Then a man on the post-office steps caused a diversion. Suddenly he flung his hat on the ground and squared off, fighting fashion. "To — with everybody!" he cried. "I'm the lad what knocked out Georgy Sam! Come on, one at a time. Step up, gen'lemen!"

There was a laugh, more laughs, then a round of laughter. The man was a Petersham character. And when the laughter died down, the skies had cleared and the pitch of tension had broken. I blessed that man's inborn sense of humor.

The town square had become a sort of family picnic ground by the time I picked up the reins and called to the horses. Men made way

for us with good-natured banter and chaffing. The enemy had retired behind their doors. I drove past my uncle's office. There was no one at the window or on the steps. Finally I turned off Main Street and went to the livery stable. There I was to leave the team.

Trainer climbed down, I after him. He was as stolid as ever, and as uncommunicative.

"Now we'll go get some dinner," said I. "We've done a good morning's work."

He grunted. "Might have been better." I knew he was thinking of that black-haired youth.

"Save it all up," I answered. "If I'm not much mistaken, they'll be coming out to-night. They've got to come if they're going to save their faces."

"Let 'em come," he growled.

I took Job to a restaurant for dinner, so that there should be no danger of his meeting Mr. Coke. Afterwards he went back to the Valley, and I busied myself with plans for the coming struggle.

XIV.

WITH the coming of dusk, my plans were practically completed. As the last stroke of seven should sound from the town-hall clock, I would mount the horse which Sam would have ready, and head for the western road. At least a dozen other men would strike into that road at or about the same time that I did.

There was great stillness in the old house as I went out into the hall. I had the feeling that I was bidding a tentative good-by to the peaceful, age-mellowed rooms and all the things they held. I was very proud of them and their traditions, prouder than I had ever been before.

I had already had supper, and now stood, watch in hand, waiting for the deep voice of the town-hall clock to strike. As I stood waiting, I saw, through the open doorway, a boy open the street gate and come up the path. He climbed the steps, and I stepped forward to meet him on the porch.

"Mr. Grant told me to give this to Mr. Richard Coke," said the lad, pulling a letter from his pocket. "He told me to be very careful to see that no one but Mr. Richard Coke got it."

"Very well," I answered. "Give it to me. I'm Richard Coke."

The boy handed me the letter. "Yes, I know it's you," he said, with a grin. "I seen you down-town in the wagon this mornin', and I heard folks call your name."

I nodded, absorbed in other thoughts, and the boy, seeing me so unresponsive, turned and retreated. I read my name on the envelope,

and was just about to tear off the end when the town clock broke into its first deep ring. The sound came to me very like a voice. I stuffed the letter in my pocket and wheeled about. I snatched my hat from the rack, and slipped into a loose pea-jacket. When I was ready I found Sam waiting at the gate with my horse. The last stroke of the bell had not ceased to echo in the still evening air before I was mounted and riding to the west.

I shall never know another ride like that. I could appreciate something of what Paul Revere must have felt as he left Boston on that April night. Petersham was quiet, so still that it seemed to me my horse's hoofs would draw men to their windows. Our street was empty save for a lumbering market-wagon, which I had soon caught and passed. The trees, arching above me, made a frame for the distant circular view of open country.

I was to wait in the neighborhood of a certain farm-house until the first five of our party should appear. This was to avoid the danger of our plans having leaked out and the Riders having posted men to waylay single horsemen. Yet in order that we might not attract undue attention, we were going in two detachments.

Within ten minutes after I had forced myself to draw rein and wait, five friends had joined me, each set of face and wrapped in an air of mystery. We spoke together, in whispers, and as soon as all the first detachment had arrived, took up our journey.

The meadows were at peace; the woods, when we came into them, were swept by no louder sound than a soft whistle of the wind. Above us the sky darkened, stars were lit, and a young moon floated up and hung slantwise just ahead of us. And the soft rustle of the trees, the whispers in the hills, and the blue and silver sky all made me think of Emily.

We rode slowly, speaking little, and trying not to break the stillness all about us. Night was well advanced as we came through the gap in the hills and entered into the bowl of Happy Valley. We had no objection to being seen here, and rode boldly up to John Burney's house.

The long, low, white building, with the *Clarion* sign glistening in the moonlight, looked as quiet as ever. An old barn, some fifty yards from the house, was to shelter our horses, and there we now went. The nags safely cared for, I led my little band back to the door of the printing-office.

There was no excitement here. Mr. Burney sat at his desk, writing by the light of a big lamp. Elmer was sorting type at his table. Emily was not in sight. The big press stood at one end of the room, quite oblivious to the fact that it was to be the object of a bitter raid.

Our coming raised the tension. Mr. Burney put away his writing,

and shook hands with all our men, thanking them in a deep voice faintly vibrant with emotion for their great kindness in coming to his aid. They brushed his thanks brusquely aside, as men will under the strain of excitement, and pretended an unusual interest in everything about the office. Elmer stopped working over the type, and sat on his high stool, as I had so often seen him before, his long legs crooked up like those of a giant crane, his head bent forward, and his eyes peering from under his brows. The lamp in the bracket back of him cast his queer, ungainly shadow far across the floor.

I went in search of Emily, crossing the little court and hall to the dining-room. She was not there, and I went on to the kitchen. She stood, her sleeves rolled above her elbows, piling dishes on a shelf. At the sound of my step, she turned. "Oh, it's you, Richard?" she said, her voice shaking a little.

"Yes, and I'm glad to be here, right here with you. I hope you're not frightened. I've been wanting to be with you all day."

"No, I'm not frightened, but—I'm so glad you've come."

As I looked at her, her eyes were hidden by her lashes a moment, and her cheeks flushed. I stepped forward. "Oh, Emily, what brutes men are! How different women!"

She looked up and laughed softly. "You're very polite, Richard."

"I mean it."

"How do you know? You mean so many different things at different times." And she laughed again.

I was so excited that I laughed, too, at nothing apparently, and so we came out of the kitchen and sat down in the dining-room, seemingly as much amused as if we had just heard some very good joke.

But we were not allowed to laugh long. In a minute or two we heard the sound of horses' hoofs on the road, and knew that the rest of our little band of defenders were arriving. That reminded us both of our situation, and Emily's face grew pale again and her eyes big and a trifle strained, although I knew it was not fear for herself, but for the rest of us, that was stirring at her heart.

I did the best I could to convince her that the Riders would leave as soon as they found that the *Clarion* press was guarded by a band of determined men, or that, if they insisted on trying to come to close quarters, a scattering fire of shot from the house would teach them the lesson they deserved. She only half believed me, although I think she really tried to. Too much was at stake for her to persuade herself readily of our success. Then I told her what she ought to do: how she must stay here in the dwelling part of the house, preferably above-stairs, and on no account venture out until her father or I should come for her. She nodded her head as if in assent, but her eyes were far away in thought.

I glanced at the clock on the mantel-piece. It was after eleven. "I must be going over to the office now," I said slowly. "You're sure you're not afraid to stay here alone?"

"Afraid?" she answered. "Yes, I'm more afraid here than I'd be with you men. But I know how you all feel. I'd be a hamper." She held up her head resolutely. "No, I'm not afraid. I've got plenty of nerve. I'm all right—unless—unless something happens to Father or you or Elmer."

Her voice had suddenly dropped to a whisper. My hand, resting on the side of my chair, chanced to touch hers. For a moment we sat there side by side, hand clasped in hand. Then, drawing a little away from me, her eyes shining, she said, "Richard, I'm so glad you came to Petersham!" I would have spoken, but she quickly shook her head. "No, go now. They need you over there more than I do."

I could say nothing, my heart was too full of a sudden intoxicating joy, and while I stood so she ran lightly from the room. "They need you more than I do." Ye gods! I felt myself a very Samson now!

The printing-office had quite a military aspect by the time I returned to it. Men lounged against the walls, sprawled upon chairs, or walked about the room, trying to seem perfectly composed. Job Trainer, arms folded, stood at attention near the desk. But if some stranger, utterly ignorant of the real circumstances, had entered, I am certain he would instantly have felt the warlike spirit in the air.

Presently a man who had been talking to John Burney went around the room, putting out the lamps which hung in brass rings about the walls. After that we sat in darkness, instinctively lowering our voices. I knew that by now it was some little time after twelve.

I was sitting so that I looked out one of the windows that faced the main road. Of a sudden I saw them coming, enormous black figures in the moonlight, riding what seemed enormous steeds. The black cloth fell from their shoulders to their feet, the black caps with their peaks towered high. Here and there was the glint of what looked like steel.

I was afraid, I admit it, for one instant. I had the old horror of the spectral. I felt that these creatures were more than men. Then the shudder passed, and I touched the man next me on the shoulder. "Here they come!" I whispered.

Our men crowded to the windows. In the darkness we could hardly be seen. We watched the Riders slowly gather in the road until there seemed an enormous group of them. Then three put their horses over the grass, and rode up to the door of the printing-office. "The — fools!" a man behind me muttered, as though to nerve himself.

A shot rang out so abruptly that I jumped. Then came a voice: "Burney, come out here!"

No answer came from the office.

Again the voice: "Burney, we've come for your press!"

No answer from the office.

The three rode closer, right to the door, and one, stooping sideways, knocked upon it with the butt of his pistol. He hammered until he tired. "Open your door, or we'll break it down for you!" came the command.

The summons brought no answer, and one of the men turned and beckoned. Two men who had dismounted ran up with a heavy log. Using this as a battering ram, they crashed against the door. But we had taken care that the door should hold.

Now the three who had come first were off their horses. One of them came to my window, and I drew back into the shadow. A pane of glass broke before his pistol-butt. "Out of the way," growled a voice, and Job Trainer stepped up. He flung up the broken window, and stood face-to-face with the man. "You will break honest men's windows, will you?" he roared, and drove his right arm at the man's face like a great engine-rod. The Rider reeled, threw up his arms, and toppled to the ground.

Meanwhile the door was sagging. Our men closed about it, and put their shoulders to it, but more Riders had brought more logs, and the battering never stopped. At last the hinges snapped, and the wood broke inward. We jumped out of the way, and then back onto the fallen door. Half a dozen of us faced the Riders.

"Give us the press!" cried one. "Hand over Burney and that press!" called another. "Out of the way and we'll take it ourselves!" yelled a third.

But none of them came on, and, though we could not see their faces, they saw a ring of ours.

"See here, you men," said one of the Riders, "we've come here for Burney's press, and we're going to have it! Your blood's on your own heads if you stand in the way. Where is Burney?"

"Here," said a deep voice.

"This fight's on your own hands. Will you give up that press?"

"No; it's mine, and I keep my property."

"Then, by God, we'll show you!" and on the word the man plunged in at the opening, the others crowding behind.

Blow fell on blow. I ducked and then drove my body full into the nearest man. And all around was fighting and cursing, and a wild swaying of men. Then behind us came an avalanche of strength. Trainer and the men from the window crushed against us, and we sent the Riders sprawling back through the door hot-foot. I know I caught one man on the jaw as I was hurled against him.

For a minute or two they rested, nursing their bruises and pulling

themselves together. They must have seen our faces as we stood ringed about the door, and have realized that they could reach the press at the other end of the room only by sweeping us out of the way. That looked no easy task. Job Trainer had pushed a little in front of the rest of us now, and stood glaring at the enemy, his huge fists fairly twitching with his desire to hammer some one.

Now the Riders gathered into a group and conferred. Then they moved slowly away, back as far as the road, where two or three of them were in charge of the horses.

"Thank God, they 've given it up!" I heard Mr. Burney ejaculate. "Not they!" said some one else, and Trainer muttered, "What a dog-gone shame!" We drew back into the house and patched up the door as best we could. I stood at a window, watching, and wondering what would come next.

Three minutes later I realized. A cart had been drawn up beside the road, and several of the Riders now climbed up into it. They began throwing out what seemed to be bundles of wood and bales of straw to the others. A man looking over my shoulder cried shrilly, "They 've got torches and faggots there, and straw soaked in kerosene! Look sharp! They 'll be burning down the house!"

Flame after flame flashed forth, torch after torch was lighted, and the Riders seized the wood and the straw and came on toward the house. They were a lurid-looking crew with their peaked head-pieces and the tossing flames dancing all about them. And now they meant real mischief.

"What shall we do?" some one cried.

"There 's only one thing to do," John Burney answered. "We 've got to meet them outside and keep them away from the office. It 's that or have it burnt down over our heads!"

"Come on, then!" cried Job Trainer, with joy in his voice. A minute later we were out of the building and waiting for the attack.

I scarcely know how things happened then, they came so fast. The Riders, devil-like, rushed upon us, striking with their torches. We broke and separated, each man waging his own campaign. I heard some scattering shots. It seemed as if we fought in a sea of flames and a din of curses and wild cries, blows and falls. I saw a man just beyond me touch his flame to a bundle of straw and poise himself to hurl it at the roof. I jumped at him and tore the stuff from his hand. He turned and struck at me, I struck back, and a second later we were rolling on the ground, pounding each other with might and main.

When I tore myself free and leaped to my feet I had an instant's glimpse of some of our men on the roof fighting flames, of Trainer with a chair in his hands, crashing it down on a Rider's head and knocking him senseless. My man had lost his torch and straw, I had

tangled him in his cap and cloak so that he was almost choked, and he limped as he stood up. A howling mob was about me, and the lust of battle in my veins. I seized the burnt out torch and dashed at the nearest black-robed man.

At that moment came a shot. Then followed another. The man before me dodged and I ran on, pulling the pistol from my pocket. I heard a voice that sounded like John Burney's, as if in pain, and ran that way. I found it was he, that he had been hit in the leg and was stretched on the ground. I saw the man who had shot him, a tall figure, and my heart cried for revenge. "Curse you!" I shouted at him and headed his way. Some one hit at my arm and knocked my pistol from my hand. I found myself facing the Rider, the torch I still held ready to hurl at him. I thought he cried, "You fool!" and caught the light on his pistol-barrel. "You shot Burney!" said I, as cool as ice. "Shall I shoot you?" he answered. "Shoot and be ——" I cried, and leaped at him. But as his finger moved some one rushed between, some one who rushed at him, and who took the shot in his own body. His arms waved, and he fell backward. I bent forward. To my horror, I saw it was Jerry Dolliver.

Rage followed horror. I rushed at the Rider, and, beating down his pistol, tore at the mask he wore. One wrench brought it away. In the wild light I saw the cold, malignant features of my uncle!

"You!" I cried. "You! You have killed Jerry!"

XV.

JERRY'S head rested on my knee, and I was calling to him. My words were a wild, incoherent stream. It occurred to me that this was a horrible reminder of my first finding him lying in the road on my way to Petersham. I prayed that it might prove a nightmare, but meanwhile his head was heavy and his face pitifully white.

"Jerry," I cried in his ear, "Jerry, for God's sake, open your eyes!"

Finally the lids fluttered apart. He moistened his lips. "Dick," he whispered, "I heard of the trouble, an' I wanted to help you. I was watchin', an' I did n't want you to get kilt." His eyes closed again.

"So you ran in? Oh, Jerry, Jerry! Oh, dear God, let him live! Oh, please let him live!"

But the face was even whiter than before. I bent to his ear again. "Jerry, Jerry dear, do you forgive me?"

Once more his eyelids fluttered open. "You forgive me, Dick? I did n't go for to hurt you with her. Take care of her for me, Dick!"

"Oh, I know it, I know it, Jerry! I know you were perfectly right. I love you, Jerry. Oh, what a mess it's been!"

"Would you mind"—the words came very slow and low now—"Dick, holdin' my hand in yours?"

I took his hand and held it very tight in mine, but it seemed to do no good, for his eyes closed and his body sank lower in my clasp.

I glanced about. I had forgotten the battle. The Riders seemed to have vanished. Men were beating out fire on the roof.

"Help!" I cried. "Come here quickly, some one!" Very gently I laid Jerry down.

When I looked up, Emily was there.

"Quick!" said I. "Get some men here."

Almost instantly she was back with three men. Together we lifted Jerry and carried him to the house.

"Can you get him upstairs, to my room?" whispered Emily. I nodded, and we bore him carefully up the stairs and placed him gently on her bed.

"Now a doctor!" I said.

"He's coming," answered Emily. "He's been down-stairs, binding Father's leg."

For the first time I remembered. "How is he, your father?" I cried.

"It's not a very bad hurt. He's comfortable now." She laid a hand on my arm. "And you, Dick, you're all right?"

"All right," I answered, and hurried to the door to hasten the doctor. He was in the room in a minute, and working over Jerry, while Emily and I stood in a corner, too frightened to speak.

It seemed hours before the doctor turned and gave us a few directions. Then we stood by and watched him cut and bathe and bind. I can never recall what he did. Finally I know he said: "He's a fighting chance for it. Go now. I'll look after him."

Silently we stole out of the room, and tiptoed down the stairs. "Was any one else hurt?" I asked as we came to the door.

"Not very badly, I think. Cuts and bruises and burns. I watched you from my window. I had to look. Oh, those horrible shots!" She shivered. "And Job—I can see him now! How he fought with that chair! Oh, he was wonderful!"

I sat down on the doorstep. All of a sudden I felt very weak. I put my hand up to my forehead. My face was dripping wet.

"Thank Heaven they're gone," I muttered. "I was all right, but I'm weak as a baby now. It was seeing Jerry and—him."

As I sat there, a gentle hand rested on my shoulder, almost as if to support me, and presently I heard Emily's voice say, "I'm thanking God for a great many things, Richard."

I turned my head and looked into her eyes, bright and star-like

with unshed tears, so close beside me. I held out my arms, and suddenly she had nestled in them. It seemed we had found content after a long, long struggle for it.

It was the doctor who woke us. His voice seemed to come from some far away distance behind us. He said: "I think he'll recover. It's a bad shot in the chest. I'll send a woman in to nurse him, and I'll be in myself every two hours. Now I'll see to the others." He turned and his steps echoed down the hall.

Emily drew herself away from me.

"God is good, dear," she said. "He's given Jerry back."

I bent my head, and for a moment we sat in silence. Then I looked up at her. Nothing could lessen this miracle that had come to me. "Emily," I whispered, and, bending, held her in my arms again and kissed her. I forgot the rest.

After a while I was back in the printing-office. It looked as if the battle had been fought there rather than out-of-doors. The press stood safe in its old position, but the door was gone, all the front windows broken, Mr. Burney's desk, Elmer's high table, and all the chairs and stands for type broken and piled in confusion where they had been used to barricade the entrance. Several men lay resting on the floor, their heads or arms recently bandaged by the doctor; others stood gathered at the door. Two lamps now lighted the room and showed a dismal place. All the excitement had gone from the men's faces and manners. They were just tired and sore, and a full reaction seemed to have set in.

I joined the group in the open doorway, and learned all the news from them. The doctor had told them that John Burney's wound, although painful and likely to keep him in bed for some time, was not dangerous, but that Jerry Dolliver had had a very narrow call. No one seemed to understand how Jerry had happened to be there. I could only suggest that he had probably ridden out by himself to see what was going to happen, and had gotten in the way of a bullet when he saw me in danger. It was generally believed that as he had not worn disguise he was not one of the Riders.

Each man told again and again the stirring incidents of his own share in the fighting. Some, who had leaped to the roof to put out the flames, had burned hands and clothes to show. Several thought that the Riders' headgear and cloaks had handicapped them, and that they had more wounds to carry home than we. So far as was known, none of their side had been shot. Luckily, there had been little firing—such hand-to-hand conflict did not permit it. Some one had tried to kill Mr. Burney, but otherwise the shooting seemed to have been very scattering. I did not speak of my own encounter with the tall Rider.

Now it was learned again, and more in detail, of blacksmith Job's part. It was he who had really turned the tide of battle while I had been holding Jerry. They showed me the chair with which he had cleared his path wherever he went. It was he, almost alone, who had driven the Riders back, and finally sent them flying to their horses to escape his onslaught of blows. I looked about for him, but he was not to be seen, and some one told me he had gone home as soon as the doctor had told him that Mr. Burney was not seriously hurt.

As soon as the outcome of the fighting was clear, our men had held their hands and allowed the Riders to scramble off or drag themselves away. In a short time they had disappeared down the road, the well riding beside the wounded, and the whole party keeping close together. Some had lost their masks and been recognized, but no one told me if my uncle had been discovered.

Our men were almost unanimously agreed that this night's work had ended the Riders' reign. The tale of the fight and of the Riders' defeat would spread at once through the country, and the power of their mysterious strength be broken. They had learned what some, at least, of their townsmen thought of them. Yet although they, John Burney's friends, had won, they felt the shadow of such a fight upon them. A civil war can bring small satisfaction to the victors when they know the enemy to have been of their blood. Our band had no real sense of jubilation; rather regret that affairs had ever reached this pass. Petersham had been rent in two, and the wound would be long in healing.

This was the feeling that hung heavily over all of us as, in the early hours of the morning, the men left the *Clarion* office by twos and threes for their ride home. All were tired, worn, and spent with excitement, and the chill air of the October dawn could scarcely cheer their spirits. I watched them go, standing out on the grass before the house, now scarred with great black patches where the fires had been. None of us called messages to one another, for fear of disturbing the wounded men within-doors. It might almost have been the return of the vanquished rather than of the victors.

As the last man rode out of sight, I turned back to the printing-office. I was not yet ready to go home. I walked in at the ruined doorway, climbing the pile of furniture that blocked it, and sat down on the edge of an overturned table. As I sat there, I felt the touch of a hand on my shoulder. I turned and found Elmer standing beside me.

"Mr. Coke," he said, and although he spoke in his hesitating way I thought his look into my face was steadier than usual, "you will marry Miss Em'ly. I know you will—oh, yes, I know you will."

"I love her, Elmer," I answered, "more than anything else on earth."

He took his hand from my shoulder, and his eyes seemed to glisten. "I hated you first thing, an' I hated you a long while after. I thought you was bringin' trouble to them both, an' I love them both so's I can hardly bear to think about it. It almost chokes me sometimes." He waited a moment. "But I was wrong. You did your best for 'em both."

"I tried my best to help, Elmer."

He nodded his head at me. "I know it, I know it. And I could see what was comin'. There was n't no use in tryin' to fight it. You an' Miss Em'ly was goin' to marry."

His eyes seemed now to have the distant vision of a prophet. He stood very still, his face almost marble white in the lamplight, and I noticed for the first time lines about his mouth that seemed to speak of self-conquest, and that refined his whole face.

Then, before I knew it, he had fallen on his knees and caught at my hand. "Oh, be good to her," he said brokenly. "Be good to her. I'd have given my life for her. There's no one like her. Be as good to her as—as any man can be."

"I'll try to be, Elmer," I answered, almost as much moved as he.

"Do, do," he pleaded. "But men are so diff'rent, an'—you may n't see her as I do."

I could find no words to speak, and shortly after Elmer was on his feet again.

"I had to tell you this, Mr. Richard," he said. "I've always loved her, an' I've been so frightened of the man she might love." He added hastily: "Not frightened for me, but for her."

I sat still, looking up at him. I knew him for a much better man than I. I sprang to my feet. "Elmer," I cried, "I've never been fair to you. I've never known you really. Forgive me. I know you now. I know what you are." I held out my hand. "Will you be friends?"

He put his hand in mine. I saw him no longer as an ungainly, twisted creature, but as one of the finest, truest men on earth. I saw him at last as I think Emily must have seen him always.

After that he left me, and I sat down on the overturned table again. I felt that the scales had dropped from my eyes this night. I had walked through my life here blindly, no more able to tell the good from the bad than to know my boyish passion for Letty Shannon from love itself. I had been but a boy, after all. But this night had made me a man. I saw Jerry now, true to me in every act and thought, knowing Letty and knowing me as I had never done, watching over me, and ready to make the last great sacrifice for my sake. I bent my head in my hands as I thought of him. Then I came to Elmer. Here was another man, a real man, no such vain, changeable, blind creature as

I, but fit to be a hero by every test of fate. I knew that I had brought him untold suffering, and would still do so, but I knew that he would never let Emily catch a glimpse of it. What stuff some men are made of! When I rose from that table, I thanked God that He had sent two such men my way.

. I came out from the office just at that time before dawn when it seems as if the whole world is listening for day's coming. I was almost afraid to break the stillness with the noise of footsteps. And as I stood there, spellbound, as it were, by the hour, it happened that I put my hand in the pocket of my coat. Mechanically my fingers drew out a paper that was there. I remembered it now. It was the note Mr. Grant had sent me just as I was leaving home, and that I had not had time to read.

I stepped back into the office, that I might have light to read the letter. I tore open the envelope and unfolded the sheet of paper within. My eyes ran quickly over the words.

DEAR RICHARD COKE:

The man who took the tin box was your father's brother. I felt you should know this before you leave home to-night. The papers were probably worthless. Come to see me as soon as you can, and we'll try what we can do to save something from the wreckage. Black sheep will turn up even in the best of families.

Your father's friend and yours,

ANTHONY GRANT

I was not surprised. Although I had not actually phrased the thought to myself, I had lately been coming to believe that my uncle's slyness was beyond the need of proof. I had suspected even while I tried not to. But to-night's events had lifted the last veil from him. He feared and hated me; he would not have stopped from putting me out of his path forever. Well, I was relieved to know that there could be no more delusions between us. I knew where I stood and where he stood.

I tore the letter slowly into tiny bits and threw them through the window. Then suddenly the hideousness of the situation broke upon me. He was my father's brother, he was the bearer of my name, he was the respected Master of Petersham. I remembered how I had seen him first, and how my admiration had risen instinctively at sight of him. His face had been so noble, his voice so kind, his welcome so generous. I thought how I had compared him in spite of myself to my mother's brother, Uncle Elijah Pegram, and how, much as I loved him, the lonely, weather-beaten, rough-timbered old sea-captain had seemed an infinitely lesser figure. Yet he was true as steel, and Mr. Junius Brutus Coke as false as Judas. The scales had fallen, and for a time I stood there blinking in the new light.

At length I saw my way again before me. I would go back to the old house and become its master. If one Coke had been false to his family, another would labor so far as in him lay to repair that family name. So planning, I crossed the little court to the house and tiptoed down the hall, hoping that I might get some further news of Jerry and Mr. Burney before I left.

Perhaps my step was heard, perhaps it was kind fate, but I had not stood in the hall above three minutes when a white figure came lightly down the stairs.

"How are they now?" I whispered.

"Jerry sleeps," whispered Emily. "Father is restless and tosses about. He's afraid he won't be able to get the *Clarion* out. He says it must come out on time next week, but the doctor's telling him he must lie perfectly still for at least a month has frightened him."

"Tell him," I whispered back, "that the *Clarion* shall come out; that I'll bring it out, and keep bringing it out until he's ready to make me assistant editor."

"Oh, Dick," she said, "I know that'll ease his mind."

"And now I'm going back to Petersham, Emily."

"Must you go? We've plenty of beds, and you must be so tired."

"No, I must go. I have something yet to do."

Perhaps a heavy note in my voice caught her ear. She came closer. "What is it, Dick?"

"A little business matter of my own. I'll tell you later. Don't ask me now. You've quite enough to think of. Good-night."

"Good-night, Dick."

That was all we said, but she had slipped into my arms and out again, long enough for me to thrill anew as my lips met hers.

Through the still night I walked to the near-by stable, mounted my horse, and rode down the highway. The scene of battle was very quiet now; peace seemed to rest upon the low white house. I rode out of the cup of hills into the desolate lands beyond.

Dawn came before I reached Petersham. I rode straight to the old house set in its frame of trees. I was no longer excited; I doubt if I have ever been as calm as when I looked at the big house in that early morning light. I whistled my call for Sam, and as if he had been waiting at the door, he answered. I threw him the reins.

"Is Mr. Coke at home?" said I.

"No, Mr. Richard," said Sam. "He ain't been home at all to-night."

I walked up the path to the house and mounted the stairs. I had the feeling that the house knew it was I who came, and that it welcomed me. I went in at the door and up to my own room. There, after a long time, I fell asleep.

XVI.

THE dining-room had not seen Mr. Junius Brutus Coke when I came down to breakfast about noon next day, nor had his bedroom, nor his study, nor Pompey. He had vanished overnight, and I wondered if he was to be seen by me no more. Perhaps it was his way of letting me know that he had abdicated, and that the house was mine.

I assumed my charge without giving the matter much consideration. I told Pompey that I had reason to believe that my uncle might be away for some time, but that our life there would go on quite as usual, and that he should do all the marketing for the present.

Then, almost as if I fancied that Mr. Coke might be in hiding somewhere within-doors, I made a round of the rooms and halls, investigating as far up as the old garret, and as far down as the cellar. I poked into chests and closets, I pulled aside curtains and peered into dark corners, but I found only the inanimate objects that belong to an old house.

For some reason, I was in no hurry to go abroad, almost fearing that Petersham might show some appalling scar as the result of the last night's battle. Therefore, I spent the better part of the day going over the house and considering plans for the future, and it was only late in the afternoon that I ventured forth to call upon Mr. Grant.

Main Street wore its usual air of unruffled calm. I met no bandaged heads nor venomous glances. I was glad to see that Mr. Grant's office-door was open, a sign that he was within. The sign did not belie the fact. I was shortly shaking hands with the elderly lawyer as earnestly as if we had not met for years.

"Well, Richard," he said, "thank God that trouble's over! I heard the news early this morning, and I believe we'll be decent now. It takes letting of blood to cure some evils. Sit down, boy, we have something to tell each other."

I sat down beside him. "I got your message. My uncle apparently has n't been home since." I found that I could not tell even him how and when I had seen my uncle last. That would have to remain forever a secret between us two.

Mr. Grant frowned at his desk. "I suspected long ago, Richard, that things were not as they should be with Junius. I knew he was speculating, I knew he had been losing a great deal of money. When you first told me of the delay in obtaining your father's papers, I had an inkling of the truth, and when you told me of the loss of the box of securities, I was certain I could name the thief. But how I hated to do it! Justice was on one side, but your well-founded pride in the good name of the Cokes seemed on the other. That day you found me looking at your father's picture decided me. I thought he wanted justice for his son.

"Of course it's easy to see now what Mr. Coke did. He found that your father's estate was gone, spent by him in his deals. He could n't put you off forever, so he gave you that box, and let you see one or two real securities lying on top. The rest must have been mere packing. Then, having arranged that you should not go over the contents until next day, he stole the box. The ease of reaching your window and of returning to his own room by ladder was self-evident. There were chances that his plans might go wrong, but he was in such a hole that he had to take those risks. Perhaps if you had n't come to me he might have gotten away with the trick. I have known Junius long enough to appreciate the spell he can lay on people—and especially on a young and hero-worshipping nephew. He could lay the same spell on me once upon a time, when we were boys together."

"Yes," I assented; "I don't think I should ever have suspected him myself. It would no more have occurred to me than that the man in the moon might have done it."

"He counted on that, Richard. He knew that if he could only keep you to himself, he was safe. He was the magician who was able at all times to weave his spell about you."

"But now the castle has fallen," I said very soberly, for it is no pleasant thing to have such illusions shattered, "and there's little left except a pile of ruins."

Mr. Grant looked at me thoughtfully. "There's the house, Richard. I doubt if we'll find that there's much else left—probably nothing of your father's, perhaps a little of Junius's property. But the house, I know, is left, for I looked up the title to that the other day, and I found that you would have to join in any mortgage or conveyance. And the house now belongs to you, by every claim of equity and justice. It is little enough he can do to make up to you for that of yours he's squandered." He paused a moment. "Of course, you realize, Richard, that he can be made to stand a criminal trial for what he's done?"

I shook my head. "No, we can't do that. I know you yourself would n't do it, Mr. Grant, if you were in my place, and—I could n't do it anyhow. We'll let him go—but I hope we don't meet again."

"Perhaps that is best," said the lawyer, "to let him go. You will have the house of your fathers', and I should be delighted to have you study law with me, if your tastes run that way."

"I don't know yet," I answered. "I shall have to look about a little bit." I was thinking of what I had said to Emily about helping her father with the *Clarion*. Such work appealed to me more at the moment than the staid profession of the law.

Shortly after I left Mr. Grant, we having reached a fairly complete understanding of the situation. He was to continue making his investi-

gation of my uncle's affairs, but I understood very clearly that, although here and there something might be saved to me, it would be but small pickings left after the feast was done.

That night I spent at home, thinking much of my father, and of the curious chances of circumstance that will sometimes thwart the dearest wishes of a man, so that the property he has designed for the protection of his children may fail them through the very custody he has considered the most safe. My uncle did not appear that evening, and I considered that the old house and we who dwelt in it were rid of him.

Next day I rode out to the Valley. The golden October sunshine lay upon it, and seemed to have swept it clear of all the shadows of that night. With my heart singing, I went into the house. I found Emily, and she told me that her father was getting on splendidly, and that, although his leg was in a plaster cast, he was able to dictate matter for the newspaper to Elmer and to her. Jerry was still very ill, and the doctor and the nurse were with him much of the time. He would recover slowly. She told me I could not speak to him, but might look in at the door of his room. I went upstairs, and pushed the door gently open. Jerry seemed asleep, but at sound of the opening door a woman who sat by his bedside turned. It was Letty. She tiptoed over to me, and we stood together in the hall. She was very pale, and the black rims under her eyes made them seem larger than ever.

"You know," I said, "how he saved my life?"

"Yes," she answered; "and now that I know he's going to get well, I'm happier than I thought I could ever be."

"He's a wonder, Letty. How little I ever really appreciated him!" I felt my eyes growing misty.

"Oh, he's so brave, Dick! I understand lots of things better now. I'm going to start all over again—fresh."

"So am I."

There was some sound in the room, and she turned instantly and glided in. I felt that I should never again underestimate the love of women.

I went into Mr. Burney's room, and found him, partly propped up by pillows, dictating to Elmer.

"Well, Richard," said he, "the paper's coming out, as usual, just on time. A little thing like a ball in the foot is n't going to make me lose any of my subscribers."

"I'm glad to hear it, sir. Did Emily tell you how much I want to help?"

"She did, and you shall," he said in his hearty way. "Emily's editor-in-chief *pro tem*, but I know she'll need assistance, wonderful girl as she is. Will you believe me, Richard, she told me this morning that she hoped it would take Dolliver and me some time to get well,

because she enjoyed managing a hospital? And, bless my soul, she knows more about nursing than any professional I ever saw!"

"I almost wish I'd been laid up, too," I said wistfully.

Mr. Burney laughed. "Never mind. You'll find you have your hands full when you try to get out the *Clarion* for me. I don't think I'll do any more dictating just now, Elmer."

The latter rose noiselessly, and in his stealthy manner left the room.

"Now, sit down, Richard," said Mr. Burney. "I want to have a long talk with you, and tell you how wonderfully well my friends stood by me. They are trumps, every man of them. I had Job Trainer in here yesterday, and told him what I thought of him. Now it's your turn."

I sat down, and we had our long talk. I know it was long by the clock which stood on a table near the bed, but it seemed as if we had only begun to discuss the recent events when Emily came in at the door with her father's dinner on a tray. I wonder if Mr. Burney noticed the sudden flush of her cheeks as my eyes rested on her.

"I'll go out to the office now," said I, "and see what I can do there. Do you think, Emily, that you'll find a few minutes after a while to come out and instruct me? I know you're awfully busy, but I want to get started right."

"I'll be out after a little while," she said, without looking at me, as she set the tray upon her father's table. I left the room slowly, walking backward, I do believe.

Half an hour later Elmer, having shown me what there was for me to do, went into the house for his dinner. I took up a page of copy that lay on the desk and tried to bring my thoughts to bear on it. I must have sighed aloud. Another sigh answered me, and a voice said, "Is it such very hard work, Richard?"

I looked up to find Emily standing midway in the room. I jumped to my feet. "Yes, it's dreadfully hard. I can think of only one thing in the world at present."

"And what is that?" she said.

"Come to the desk and I'll tell you."

"And if I'll not come? It may not be worth the hearing."

"Oh, but it is!" I exclaimed. "So much worth it that I'm coming to tell you. I think I'll shout it out so all the world may hear."

"Oh, don't, Richard!" and she took a step forward in alarm.

"Yes," I said; "I shall shout it unless you stop me. I can only think of one thing, and that is—"

But a hand was laid on my lips, and I was dumb.

Presently, after we had talked of a number of things, but not at all about the *Clarion*, Emily, who had been sitting on her father's desk, pushed me, who happened also to be sitting on the desk, a little

away from her. "Do you know, Richard Coke," she said quite severely, "you've told me many things, you've even asked me a question—"

"And you've said you'd marry me," I put in in quick alarm.

"But there's one thing I don't remember to have heard you say."

"What's that?" I asked.

"Can't you think?"

I shook my head.

"It's only three words, but, Dick—oh!" and she laid her hand on my arm and her head in its former place, "I should like to hear you say them."

"Three words?" I repeated. Then I saw a great light. "Oh, Emily, I've been saying them with every breath I drew!"

"But in words, Dick, in words."

"I love you," I said. "I thought of course you knew that."

"Again, please, dear," she whispered.

So I said them again and again, and finally gave up speech and told her in other ways. So I learned something new about Emily: that words with her are not the mere paltry coin they sometimes seem.

At nightfall I rode back home again, very loath to leave that interesting family in Happy Valley. There was no sign of Mr. Coke about the house. When I asked Pompey if he had heard anything concerning my uncle that day, he simply shook his head as before, and said: "He have disappeared without a word to me, Mr. Richard, suh," and I thought there was an aggrieved note in his voice.

For a few days I spent my time alternating between the town and the Valley, and helping prepare the next issue of the *Clarion*. Then, on Wednesday morning—I remember it was the day before the paper was to appear, and all my work on it was done, and it was wholly in Elmer's charge as printer—as I looked out the window by Mr. Burney's desk, I felt that it was beyond me to stay indoors longer. Indian summer lay upon the land. I jumped from the desk-chair and hurried to the garden, where I knew Emily was fixing a little lattice for her sweet-peas to climb.

"I can't stay here another minute," I said to her. "The roads and the hills are beckoning. Let's be going somewhere."

She smiled at my eager humor and rose from her knees. "I think I'm feeling just the same way you are, Dick. I know what we'll do. I ought to go to Petersham for some shopping I've been putting off. We'll go together."

"Where can I get you a horse?"

She pointed to a house down the road. "I used to get a little mare from a man who lives there. Will you see if I can have her now?"

I found the owner, and was soon bringing the mare back with me,

she apparently as eager to be out in the world as was I. Meanwhile, in the twinkling of an eye, it seemed, Emily had changed and now appeared, booted and in riding-clothes, the fairest picture of a horse-woman.

She on the little mare, and I on my own roan, took the high-road. There may have been other fine rides before, but I doubt it. We passed the little circle in the woods where I had found her that summer morning, and she had read of *John Ridd* and the beautiful *Lorna* to me. We told each other all we had thought that morning, and countless little things that had happened then and that we now suddenly remembered.

We rode through the hills, the bare upland country, and into the meadow-land that lay about Petersham. Now and then I lagged a bit behind, the better to see Emily, and then, catching me at it, she would dash away, and I would chase after her. But when we came to the town itself, she insisted we should be more decorous.

"Let's ride by my house," I said, when we were at last in town.

She nodded her assent, and we rode down the street under the arching maples. When we came to the corner I drew rein. "Don't you think, Emily," said I, "that you ought to have a look at it and tell me what changes you'd like made?"

She blushed. "What would the neighbors think, Dick, if they saw me going there with you now?"

"The neighbors are miles away. Besides, Pompey makes the most delicious raspberry shrub, and you're warm, so you ought to have some before you go shopping."

I whistled, and in a moment Sam appeared and took my horse, while I helped Emily down. I pushed open the iron gate and stood aside while she passed through. We went up the stone-flagged path, and just at the steps I whispered to her that the old house was welcoming its new mistress. "I love it already, Dick," she whispered back. "It's nicer than any air-castle I ever built."

I was proud of my father's house then, prouder of it than I had ever been before. The great arch of the Colonial front door seemed to take on new beauty as we stood in front of it. I looked through the opening down the long hall, cool and quiet, its polished floor almost bare of rugs. When I turned I saw that Emily's eyes had followed mine into the charming hall. "We will go into my uncle's study," I said, "and have our raspberry shrub there. I want to show you some things that were my father's."

This time she assented without demur. We turned into the room on the left of the hall.

I rang a bell for Pompey and ordered our refreshments. Then I showed Emily the old portraits on the walls, and the heirlooms that had

been kept with a befitting reverence. She could appreciate and understand them all; she seemed even to feel that they were in a way part of her own inheritance.

"I've loved this house, dear," I said after a time, "ever since I first entered its doors, but I've felt almost as long that it was much in need of a woman's care. It's been waiting for you, dear, a long, long time."

"And I think I've been waiting for it," she answered.

A discreet cough in the hall warned us of Pompey's approach, and we were seated quite properly on the sofa when he entered with the shrub and the glasses. Then we were left to ourselves again.

After a time the glasses were empty, and Emily insisted on stepping over to a little mirror to make certain that her hair was not disarranged. Satisfied at last, she came back toward me, but stopped before the hearth to look at the portrait of Henry Clay that hung over the mantel.

"What a splendid-looking man!" she exclaimed.

I stood by her side. "Magnificent," I agreed. "Do you know that picture always reminds me of my uncle? He stood just so, one arm outstretched, when he met me here, and his was as handsome a face as one could wish to see."

"What's become of him, Dick?" Emily asked.

It was strange that I should have caught the sound of a light footstep at such a moment, but I did. I wheeled about. Mr. Coke stood in the doorway. He stood very straight, with a little smile on his lips.

"So," I said, "you have come back, after all?"

He waved his hand in deprecation of my question. I could still wonder at the graceful gesture.

"I have much to talk over with you, Richard," he said slowly, and he looked toward Emily, who had now turned to face him.

"Whatever you have to say she would like to hear," I said. "We have no secrets from each other. This is Miss Burney, John Burney's daughter, and my promised wife."

Mr. Coke bowed, such a bow as I am sure few men could make, and, glancing at Emily, I saw that she was charmed at his courtesy. I realized that I must make this scene as short as possible.

"Since we were last in this room together," I said somewhat abruptly, "I've learned many things. Some I've learned with the help of Mr. Anthony Grant, and those relate to my father's estate and why I lost his papers. The others I've learned for myself, and those are between us two alone. Mr. Grant and I have reached the conclusion that I shall keep this house, and that you may keep your secrets."

"Is the bargain fair," he asked, "Nephew Richard?"

"No," said I; "it's not, but I'm content with it. In spite of what's passed, we're still of the same blood."

"But is it fair to me?" he asked.

I saw suddenly behind the smiling mask. "Yes," I cried; "a thousand times more than fair to you! I am the head of the house of Coke in Petersham, and you leave town a stranger!"

"What shall I do?" he said.

"Do?" I exclaimed. "Your nest is feathered somewhere, go and live in it. But remember that from now on if you come to this house, if you appear in Petersham, I give my secrets into the care of the law."

He touched his lips with his silk handkerchief. "You are dramatic, Richard. Have a care. The law? Pshaw, I've been a lawyer forty years."

"Well," said I, "try it and we'll see. A new light has come to Petersham, and the *Clarion's* rung in a new day."

"In that case," said he very suavely, "perhaps it is really time that I was going. I have ever been conservative, I fear." He bowed to Emily. "Take good care of him, my dear. A wild youth, a reckless temper." Then he glanced at me. "And yet, in spite of all, I can't help liking him a little. It may be his grandfather in him. He was a very fine man."

Perhaps that echo of family pride made my uncle draw himself up quite erect again, toes turned out, and stand so for a minute. Perhaps it was simply second-nature with him now to be picturesque, or perhaps his eyes had rested on the long portrait above the mantel. In any case he stood there, and he made a very fine figure of a man.

He was gone, and Emily had turned to me. "What a splendid face, Dick! Are n't you treating him rather hardly? I know the house is yours, but could n't he perhaps have a room in it?"

So had his influence affected even her, sure judge as she was of the good! I shook my head. "No, dear, I don't think I'm unjust, but he must have no place here any more. He would only stir up a troubled past, and this house is to have a future."

Yet, notwithstanding my assurance, I was very thankful he was gone. I knew that sometimes his face would haunt me, and I knew that, in spite of all he had done to me, I could not help but feel, even as he had felt toward me, a little liking. A very remarkable man, was my uncle Junius, a very big man, in fact, only, unfortunately, his talents had taken to growing in the wrong direction.

I shook the thought of him from me. "Now," I said, "I must show you the little arbor out in the garden. I've often dreamt about you there. Come and show the garden you are real."

"But I must go shopping, Dick," Emily protested.

"One can go shopping any day," said I, "but one can only—" and I stopped, for I was not certain what I was about to say.

"One can only do what once, Dick?" she asked. "What were you going to say?"

"Nothing," I answered. But she would make me tell her.

"'Make love only,' were the words," said I unwillingly.

"So that's the way you feel about it, is it?" she asked, her eyes very bright.

"No; I can make love to you all the days of my life, and I shall," I answered. "I'm ready to go shopping, if you wish."

But when we came into the hall we turned toward the garden and not toward the front door, and it was Emily who turned. Of course I had to go her way.

CONSOLATION

BY E. F. HULSWIT

MY mother said, long years ago,
Within her heart sang soft and low
Two charmèd words—a tiny lay:
"Some day," it ran. "Some day! Some day!"

When Youth strove bitterly with Life,
And sank outworeid in the strife,
When e'en Hope failed, and Love had fled,
"Some day, some day!" the voice still said.

She told me she had heard the song—
Now faint and low, then clear and strong—
Till toil and care had dulled her brain;
But in her age it came again.

I watched by her the night that she
Did slip into Eternity.
Oh, wondrous change! One glorified
Lay in the place of her who died.

Dear God, that look of blest surprise!
Did heaven open 'fore her eyes?
And is it Death Thou send'st to say,
"Tired child, thy Some Day is To-day"?

THIRTY YEARS OF PENCRAFT

WHAT IT CAME TO AND WHAT IT COST

*By General Charles King**

Author of "Lanier of the Cavalry," "The Colonel's Daughter," etc.

IN TWO PARTS—PART I.

A WAY back in the sixties, just after the Civil War, I had been stationed at New Orleans, and later, during the so-called reconstruction period, was there again on staff duty, seeing much of life in Louisiana and Mississippi. Those were "Ku Klux" and "White League" days, and ours were most unwelcome duties. It was good to get away from them, even to go to Arizona and the Apaches, but before going, in hopes of eking out the slender pay of a married subaltern at an expensive station, I had written a story. It described conditions in the Southwest at that particular time. It did not eulogize the "Carpet Bag" government; it did not satirize the Senegambia legislatures then electable; it simply told what I had seen of both, and by no means all. That initial effort went to the Harpers in search of a market, and boomeranged back inside of a month. This was in 1873. Not until more than ten years later did that manuscript become "available," and then a prominent member of that old-established house inquired: "Why did n't you come to us instead of that Quaker City concern?"

Now, this is the way it happened: Straight from New Orleans we went to Arizona, the manuscript and I—that is, straight as one could then go, which was by rail to San Francisco and by steamer thence, a two-weeks voyage to the Colorado and another week up that winding,

* Few, if any, American writers have won a greater or more deserved popularity than General Charles King; and surely none in his chosen field. He has depicted the American soldier, and army life in general, with his pen as faithfully as did the late Frederic Remington with his brush. General King began his career as a writer while a subaltern shortly after the Civil War. His literary reminiscences, covering the past three decades, add an interesting chapter to the annals of American letters

THE EDITOR.

shallow stream. Politico-military work was gladly dropped in favor of Indian fighting, even though that presently led to the loss of some of the sabre arm, and later to all hopes in the line of promotion. But before the retiring board settled that matter, the regiment had again crossed the continent, had left Apache land to take a second campaign against the Sioux, had fought and followed them through miles of Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, and Dakota, driving Sitting Bull across the British line and Red Cloud out of business. Then followed the rush to save Chicago in the riot year of 1877. Then back to the grand chase of Chief Joseph, the modern Moses of the Nez Percés, along the upper Yellowstone. Then came the campaign against the Cheyennes, and finally in the winter of '78-9 the manuscript and I were again in Louisiana, both now in quest of employment. The surgeons had said I should give up the sword, so nothing was left but the pen.

It had so happened that one valuable habit, at least, had been contracted while in active service, that of keeping a diary. Whether on staff duty in the South, or campaigning over our Western frontier, everywhere with me went note-book and pencil, and faithfully each day's doings were jotted down. I never dreamed how much it would all be worth. There was the unvarnished record of several years of sharp, stirring work, of long months of each year crammed with strenuous life, for cavalry service in the seventies knew few idle moments. It was rough as the Rockies themselves, but it was a grand experience. A month for recuperation in a Western city revealed the fact that even old friends and schoolmates knew nothing whatever about that life. "How on earth do you kill time out there?" was the question, coupled with unflattering suggestions as to whiskey and poker. One night I broke loose and told them, and was astonished when a journalist present urged me to put it in writing for his paper.

And so at last, in '79, the door was opened. From the old notebooks of the Sioux campaign, each Sunday for several months the story was told, and in the summer of 1880, as compensation, the Sentinel Company of Milwaukee published in pamphlet form five hundred copies. "Campaigning With Crook," therefore, was the first of more than fifty books, and much more than fifty shorter stories, for which I am accountable, to see the light.

But all this time the old manuscript had been waiting for a chance. The *United Service*, a military monthly, was then being issued in Philadelphia. Its editors were favored with a peep at those graphic pages, and finally wrote that they could find a publisher if I could find four hundred dollars to cover the cost. I said I could n't find forty or even four that were not imperatively needed for other purposes. So again the little romance went into hiding. But several

papers had said surprisingly pleasant things about "Campaigning With Crook." Presently two or three little sketches of army life were submitted to, and appeared in, the *United Service*—they were too trivial to be paid for—and then came a request for another look at "that old Ku Klux story." The editors had become inspired with an idea: An officer of high rank in the Navy had written a long tale of man-o'-war life. They were minded to publish two serials in the magazine—the other of soldier doings, and my yarn might answer the purpose.

But by this time, 1881, the State University had been in need of a retired officer, and for something much more in a soldier's line than story-writing. This, too, led to close touch with the citizen soldiery of my old State and to welcome and lasting relations with them. The experiences were novel. The horizon was broadening, and in the occasional hours of leisure, and out of the pages of the past, a new story had begun to bubble in my brain—a story that, to my thinking, had more possibilities than its Ku Klux predecessor. Two chapters had been roughly pencilled on a ten-cent block. These, instead of the travel-worn tale of reconstruction days, were sent to the *United Service*, and back came, not the expected, as hitherto, but a sweet surprise. "I have read it carefully, critically, and in extenso," said the editor, "and I am delighted with it. We start it at once."

And so before the fifth chapter was written, and long before the story was blocked out, and over a year before the closing pages were penned, the first and second chapters of "The Colonel's Daughter," then called "Winning His Spurs," burst into print, and, willy nilly, I had to go on and finish it.

Written utterly haphazard, penned or pencilled month by month when the magazine needed copy, and never before, the story went prayerfully on. Without one definite idea in my head at the start what was to be their lot at the close, or their career in between times, the characters were sent on their way, and the author chased after as best he could. The only romance or work I ever began without previous plan and study, "The Colonel's Daughter" set a pace, so say the critics, that left its flock of successors far in the rear. For thirty years have I been trying—trying hard—to write something that would seem to interest as many people, but the first to appear was about the last to lose its hold on the reading public. The "Daughter" has outsold, outlived, them all.

Sixteen months, I think, it ran through the columns of the *United Service*. "Campaigning With Crook" had netted me a little over a month's Army pay. The long serial was, of course, an experiment, and the terms for its payment, as originally offered by the editors of the magazine, were these: On its completion as a serial the publishers would bring it out in a paper binding, to be sold at fifty cents

the copy, yielding me ten per cent. of the wholesale price. In other words, my share was to be three cents on each copy sold. If it sold a thousand copies in course of a year, I might look for thirty dollars.

But better fortune was in store for it. The magazine was printed for its publishers by the J. B. Lippincott Company, of Philadelphia. The story had caught the eye of the head of the house, and before it had run its course as a serial, there came a finer offer. The Lippincotts would publish and issue it in *book* form and pay me ten per cent. on the wholesale price. My share would thus be nine cents on every copy sold. I gratefully accepted, and their check for some ninety dollars when the book was about a year old was the first financial result to me of that fortunate publication.

For the first year "The Colonel's Daughter" found few readers outside of the army. For the work of an unknown author, it had received, however, rather remarkable book notices, most of them so delightful that they were presently collected and reprinted in a little pamphlet of their own. The Lippincotts pushed the story. The field was new and almost untrodden, and presently, as they expected and as I did not, it took a start, after its year of languishing, and began to sell. Meantime, "the old Ku Klux story," of whose value I had serious doubts, had followed "The Daughter" in the pages of the magazine, and presently the Lippincotts offered to buy that outright, and issue it also in book form. The price named was not far from what the campaigning sketches had brought me, not large, but probably all its promise would warrant. It was launched just after "The Daughter" began to swim serenely on a rising tide, but I doubt if ever it sailed in her company a single day. The very name, "Kitty's Conquest," savored of triviality, yet there were some descriptions that were real, and it told of times that then had few chroniclers.

The second year's sales of "The Daughter" prompted the Lippincotts to suggest another essay, but meantime a veteran publisher of subscription books had consulted the editors of the *United Service* about an eight-hundred-page history of famous battles—from Marathon to Plevna. That brought the next proposition, and eighteen months were given to study and labor that netted a little less than one thousand dollars. If the future history and final catastrophe of "Famous and Decisive Battles" could have been revealed to its struggling author, ten thousand would hardly have induced him to touch it.

It was late in '85 before the old pen could again turn to fiction, though there had been two short stories for LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE, and certain other sketches. Then in just ten weeks, after months of planning and plotting, the sequel to "The Colonel's Daughter" was written, and in an unhallowed hour was given the utterly inexpressive and equally misleading title of "Marion's Faith." People

who looked for a Sunday school story were much aggrieved, and readers who sought for more of "The Daughter" were disappointed. Soldiers said it was stirring and realistic. "You're all right so long as you stick to scouting and fighting," was the way old comrades put it. But the women wanted love-making, and there was n't always enough to go round. "Marion" never quite caught up with "Grace," though her friends were many and her sales were large.

In spite of the damaged sword-arm, there had come military duties that took a lot of time. We had then and still have a famous cavalry troop in the Wisconsin Guard, and they had given me work I loved. It led to more—to the duties of inspector and instructor of the entire State force. That was nearly twenty-five years ago, and here, notwithstanding the age limit, am I rejoicing in it yet. Financially, those duties could not pay as did the old pen. Professionally, personally, and in every other way, they paid infinitely more.

But there were reasons why I *had* to write, and other reasons—bless their bonny faces—kept coming. LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE had just branched out on broader lines, and began printing a whole story in a single number. John Habberton and Julian Hawthorne had led off brilliantly, and, lo, for the third number "The Deserter" was announced, "By a Captain King," said the New York *Sun*, "which means killing the goose that laid the golden egg." In just three weeks that story was written on a "hurry call." It was seventy-five thousand words in length. It brought an immediate check for five hundred dollars, and orders from LIPPINCOTT's editor for more as fast as I could write them, and at double the price.

To the day of her death my keenest critic, Mother, declared "The Deserter" the best of all the stories, and she had *placens uxor* to back her. The *Sun's* prediction "petered out," as somebody said that year of 1886, for LIPPINCOTT's published "From the Ranks" a few months after, paid a thousand cash, and promised a raise. Then, lo, the Harpers bid six hundred for a medium length Civil War story, to run as a serial, and got it in "A Wartime Wooing," which, with Zogbaum's pictures, was presently given a frame-work of its own and launched in the book-stores. And then a strange thing happened! That six hundred dollars was for all rights, yet one day brought a letter: "The little story seems to have found friends," it said, "and we feel that you should have a share in the proceeds," and they gave it in shape of a five per cent. royalty, and are paying it yet. Moreover, they asked how soon a big story could be built for them, and speedily it came.

For then it was that hope began to dawn. Just back from a visit to the old regiment, and a breezy week of riding to hounds over the eastern edge of the Llano Estacado, with orders for three big, and all the little, stories that I could write, is it to be wondered at that the

first move was out of a boarding-house into a home we could call our own, even though we paid rent for it? Heavens, how at first the mother and the olive branches thrrove in that sunshine! "Dunraven Ranch" was told off in six weeks, overlooking the children's playground, and the Texas rides were transferred to its pages and those of *LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE*, which wanted another right away, even with *Harper's* editor calling for copy.

And then it was that the old pen straddled. Working alternate chapters on each, sometimes as much as six thousand words a day on "Between the Lines," and three to four thousand words on "Laramie," going out only for a gallop in the late afternoon, I wrote two utterly different stories at one time. The few months spent in '61 in front of Washington, with my father's brigade, had filled my heart with enthusiasm for the volunteers, especially the men of Wisconsin, Massachusetts, and Vermont, with whom we were associated. Even to enter West Point, it was hard to leave them. In "A Wartime Wooing" the famous Twentieth Massachusetts had held the centre of the stage. A story was seething that should bring to the front the Badgers, Hoosiers, and Wolverines, who later made up the Iron Brigade, but for the Harpers I chose to tell of the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac, and, to my thinking, the strongest work that ever I penned went into "Between the Lines." From North and South letters commanding it came in numbers, and from across the sea, through a former staff officer of Cavalier Stuart, came words that set my heart and the story's fame to bounding. It was the description of the great cavalry fight on the right flank the third day of Gettysburg that won this outspoken praise, and the deft use made of it by the Harpers, and the concomitant fun we had with the *Brooklyn Eagle*, whose critic had called it all a purely "mythical combat," boomed the sales up in the thousands, eclipsing for the time even those of "The Daughter."

But that was the last of the penning. Laboriously, ploddingly, long, long hours at a time that shrivelled and shortened old arm had rushed the cloven steel over myriad sheets of copy, and a queer condition of things set in as "Laramie" and "Between the Lines" were finally finished. It was not pen paralysis or writer's cramp, but something keenly neuralgic that would start above the elbow after a few hours' work, and presently go stealing from shoulder to finger-tip, and setting my teeth and nerves on edge. The tedious writing out of every line in slow, legible form became a sore trial. Several chapters, too, had been lost in the mails, and all had to be rewritten. The phonograph was just coming in. "Why not try it?" said a friend, and try we did, at first with comical result, as when our heroine's finger-nails, referred to, after the Tennysonian method, as "vermeil

tinted," came out "vermin tainted." But presently the cylinders passed to the care of a wiser head and surer hand, the roughly pencilled pages carefully read into the machine reappeared accurately typed, with a carbon copy to be held in reserve, and presently, too, these were favored with helpful criticism previously unknown to them, for, with the exception of "the old Ku Klux story" and a Christmas tale I wrote for the Harpers (more than twenty years after, dear old Mr. Alden's words of congratulation on "Captain Santa Claus" are sweet to recall), not an eye save my own had seen the pages until they were opened by the editor.

Between 1889 and 1898 there were written for the Lippincottssome for the magazine at stated prices, and others, longer and more ambitious, for "copyright" books—no less than sixteen stories varying in length from sixty to one hundred and twenty-five thousand words, "Captain Blake," "The General's Double," and "Under Fire" being the longer efforts. For the Harpers, during the same time, was written "Cadet Days," and they also brought out a fine edition of the old "Campaigning With Crook." The Lippincottss, not to be outdone, issued new and illustrated editions of the "Colonel's Daughter" series, and increased the royalties.

In 1893, yielding at last to the long-cherished plan of my mother, I had taken the family abroad. Still another publisher had loomed up, promising higher pay and fine results. It was easily possible to supply more than the two stories annually, as, at most, required by the Lippincottss. We were not yet earning by two or three thousand what this new move might cost us a year, and little did we dream to what it would and did lead! Fine offers were being made for all the old pen could produce for a term of years. In an evil hour the bait was taken, and we set sail for the Rhineland.

Near Bingen we read that a panic had started. We read of the bursting of banks, and that even our own had gone under. At Lausanne came by cable news of the burning out of our floor, at least, of a fire-proof warehouse. Good-by to our books, goods, and chattels! Double work would be needed to repair damages, and it could n't be done there. We might still carry out the grand maternal wishes and educate the children abroad, but the ways and means must come from home. Paterfamilias had promised a monthly contribution to the Authors' Syndicate, and had kept the pact. The first place he looked up on landing in Gotham, where dollars are ever needed, was the office of that aspiring association, and he found it, as advertised, on the third or fourth floor. He also found it—abandoned.

Then it was that he listened to the voice of the charmer and the tuneful lay—intransitive—of Publisher Number Four. What it all came to is herein told only in part.

LITTLE BROTHER

By Elizabeth Maury Coombs

“**W**HY, Cousin Jane! *I thought* I heard some one out here.”
“Yes, I was trying to lift the knocker. Every one has
forgotten to oil its——”

“Hinges,” supplied the slightly younger woman. “And now I look at it, Uncle Alfred has neglected to manicure it—I learned that name for cleaning your finger-nails when I was in the city.” Miss Lydia lifted the old brass hand which held a copper ball, whose peremptory tap-tap had echoed along the sleepy old hall for nearly a hundred years.

“Who would have thought he would get careless enough to neglect the brasses!” she went on. “But, you know, Ma never thought he would make a good house-boy. All those children of Daddy Jake’s turned out badly; he was a very good darky, but his second wife was a mighty skittish kind of yellow woman. However, we have had Alfred fifty-odd years now, and the girls do so dread a change.

“And how are you all? I heard about your little spell, but just could n’t get out to inquire—of course you knew how busy we’ve been. Can you think of anything busier than three old maids with a baby? And such a baby!” and Miss Lydia laughed, such a chuckling, childish laugh one’s eyes could almost renew the dimples of merriment in the wrinkled rose-leaf cheeks—those dimples that one long-passed summer of love and life had seared with its pitiless hand.

“Come right into the chamber, Cousin Jane,” continued Miss Lydia. “How did you say Cousin Lewis was? Yes, this late spring has been right hard on us old folks; but Pa always said, you remember, that ’t was the March snows put the season in the ground.”

“Yes,” snapped the older lady; “they put a season in me, too, and raised a mighty good crop of late rheumatism.” She leaned heavily on her companion’s arm as they came slowly down the wide hall, past the two tall, carved-back, comfortless chairs, and their elongated counterparts in the glassy polished floor. Pausing to pick a fragrant leaf from the stiff bunch of citronaloes and clove pinks on the candle-stand, the old lady looked up and said in her usual querulous tone, “Nearly five already, if that clock’s right—which it

never has been. I've always believed it kept time by ear. And Jim will come by for me at six." The old clock, with its filigree hands before its face, almost smiled as Cousin Jane passed, while it ticked on self-righteously toward the wrong hour.

The open back-door framed the garden, basking in the June sunlight, its pink poppies swaying in the swing of a lady-like breeze. But the two old women had passed the flower age, and the older one said pertinently, "How are your early strawberries?"

"Only fair this year," Miss Lydia sighed softly. "No, strawberries are n't what they used to be, Cousin Jane. You and I remember the Alice Maudes that Pa raised right there"—pointing—"where those hollyhocks are below the snowball bush. Little Brother wanted the hollyhocks in that corner, though, so they could be near the gray palings—and they *are* prettier—he said they were so like French gardens."

"Yes," assented Cousin Jane; "I have noticed them there a good many summers, staying all buttoned up till August because it's too shady."

"Well, you know," almost pleaded Miss Lydia, as they turned to go in the door, "when they do come in, they are so much nicer to have because the others are all gone."

There was an air of cool green comfort in "the chamber"; one wondered why, for the old "hit or miss" rag carpet was in shades of faded blue from ghosts of Little Brother's well-washed overalls and the grays of the "girl's" guinea-chicken calicoes. Yet the note of green lingered in memory. So the geraniums in terra-cotta pots and saucers on the window-sill, with the view of the gray-green poppy leaves beyond, spelled rest even to the fidgety old woman who received the turkey-tail fan Miss Lydia offered, and waved it with a certain left-over grace from an admired girlhood. Relics of beauty linger long after a beautiful youth; sometimes, on an old and faded woman, they seem like a dead woman's jewels on an ugly second wife.

"Take the rocker, Cousin Jane," said Miss Lydia, "Ma's old rocker, here by the window, where she could see to sew. Would n't she love to sit here now and be making hemstitched frocks for Little Brother's baby!"

"Yes, she would, I suppose; she always set a great deal of store by Henry, and," Cousin Jane continued, "she seemed to think the more you girls sacrificed yourselves to him, the greater man he would be. But I have always said, 'Selfish parents raise unselfish children,' and there's some truth in that, just as your Cousin Lewis says, 'Bad example is better than precept.' Look at the sober children of drunkards! But go on and tell me about the baby; you did n't tell me a word of it when I was here that evening."

"Well, Cousin, you know I hadn't dreamed a word of it then. We were at tea that same evening when I saw the little boy that runs errands for Smith's store come in the gate with one of those dreadful yellow envelopes in his hand. I think they ought to be made to have them blue and green sometimes, instead of that bilious yellow; but, any way, I took it from him when he came to the basement window. 'Twas the first I had ever handled, and I read my name on it just as plain as print.

"The girls opened it for me, and it was from Little Brother, asking me to come at once. I had rather people would just say, 'I am dead,' and not go beating about the bush with 'Come at once.' I believe it would scare me less. But somehow they packed my clothes, and I started that night. And it was a frightful journey, roaring through railroad cuts and rattling on the track after that. The house-boy on the cars seemed real kind, and tried to persuade me to go to bed. At least, I suppose he thought he was being kind to try and persuade me to go to bed in a roomful of men. But I sat up until he came in and said this was Washington, though how he knew in that pitch dark, I don't know. Then he brushed my clothes and took out my satchel.

"Little Brother met me at the top of a flight of steps. I was mighty glad, for I would have been scared to death in a city, not having been in one since we went with Pa to the Richmond Fair in the fall of 1885. Then we went in the day, though; and trains seem to make such a rumpus at night."

"In what part of Washington does Henry live?" put in the old lady, as Miss Lydia hunted up her sweet-grass basket, and commenced to hemstitch an interminable inch-wide ruffle of linen cambric.

"I never rightly knew the name of the street where the house was, as he always gets his mail at the office."

"Umh-hm," murmured the old lady, with a lift of her eyebrows.
"Well, go on."

"As I was telling you, Henry met me with a nice closed carriage at the depot. Dear boy, always so considerate, though it was n't a damp night. The first words he said were, 'Sister, you were always so good to everybody—'"

"And that's the truth," ejaculated Cousin Jane.

"Dear Henry," continued his sister, "always so appreciative of the smallest kindness, and so thoughtful for others even in his grief."

The older lady looked out of the window a little absently during this eulogy, and when her gaze returned to the now half-tearful sister of Little Brother she said rather severely, "You stopped where he took you to his home."

"Not to his home, Cousin. He had boarded with these ladies after

he left Cousin Julia's. Not that they seemed in poor circumstances, such as we understand, but Henry explained they were ladies alone—”

“Ah, yes, I see, and took him for company,” with a slight dilation of delicate old waxen nostrils.

“Exactly,” explained Miss Lydia, and then continued: “I started to tell you that as we were driving on he said to me, ‘Sister, when I first came here’—that was a year ago—‘I was married secretly. I didn’t tell you about it, because I was afraid you might worry.’ . . . Always thinking of others,” sniffed Miss Lydia, from some mysterious depths of her black skirt producing a handkerchief. Then he said, ‘That was because we have always been so poor, and you and mother had worked so hard to send me to college. After that we lived with my wife’s aunt,’ and the poor child tried so hard to control himself when he said, ‘And now my wife is very ill—dying, the doctor says, and she will leave a little girl—and, Sister, I just knew you would take care of it for me, and I sent for you because she begged me to take it myself.’ But, of course, the poor boy couldn’t do that, because he has his business—a very successful one now, I know you will be glad to hear—and he lives at the Club.

“Well, by this time we had reached the house. Little Brother explained to me as we went that the aunt kept a very fashionable boarding-house, and that they were having a party—they had one both nights I was there. Pearl’s aunt met us, and just between you and me, Cousin, I didn’t care very much for her—though she certainly did have beautiful taste in house-furnishing; the inside of that house was nearly full of looking-glasses. She herself was dressed as you or I would have been if we were going to a ball.”

“Not I, Lydia Ann Lewis; speak for yourself,” answered Cousin Jane, pursing up her naturally small mouth until it assumed the size and expression of a well-made buttonhole.

“Well, a neat print wrapper would have been more to my way of thinking, considering there was illness in the house—Ma always wore a gray, sprigged with purple, at such times—but Little Brother said people in cities wore low neck and short sleeves no matter how old they were. She didn’t look old, though—not a gray hair, a beautiful suit of bright auburn, and such a sweet color in her cheeks!

“She took us up a long staircase. The rooms were bright as daylight, and young girls and men were dancing in them, corks were popping, and the smell of flowers came sickening sweet along with the cry of a violin; somehow they have always reminded me of a sick baby’s wailing. The aunt—I never could rightly get her name—said she hated all this racket to go on while Pearl was sick, but women must live. We stopped in an outer room, ’way up-stairs, and

waited for the doctor to come out. It seemed hours to me until he did, for the aunt had on some right heavy perfume, and that with the iodoform from the sick-room, and me having been up all night, I began to feel mighty faint and far away.

"And just about that time the doctor came out—a gruff, gray old gentleman, but kindly, I reckon—and he looked at me from under his stubby gray eyebrows, and then said, 'Lewis, why did you bring your sister here?'

"Even Brother, as patient as he is, was angry for a moment, and then told him, 'My sister comes of her own accord, and will take the child home with her.'

"Then he turned back to me, and said, 'Madam, you are a good woman, and I, for one, respect Quixotism, but I am afraid you are laying by a mighty stock of trouble for your old age. Blood will tell,' he muttered as he washed his thermometer and put it back in his satchel. When he turned round, he said, 'Madam, you understand that to bring up this child will require a great deal of vigilance!' I knew then what he was driving at: he thought I was an old maid and had had no experience with croup. But I told him better. I said, 'Doctor, indeed I do understand, and at the very first symptom I always give a dessert-spoonful of sugar soaked in petroleum, and follow it up with a hot mustard bath up as far as the knees. I am not as inexperienced as you seem to think. I really raised Little Brother, because of Ma's being so poorly after he was born, and he only needed to get his feet the least bit damp to go to coughing.'

"He took up his hat sort o' smiling, and said, 'Well, I've nothing more to say, Madam. If you understood your brother's symptoms, you will understand those of his child.'

"Well, as she is a girl," sighed Cousin Jane, "I hope they may not be quite so pronounced."

"But where was I?" continued Miss Lydia, biting off a fresh needleful of thread with a slow, benevolent bite, not the swift, spiteful snip of most maiden ladies. "Oh, yes, then the nurse came in—a sister of charity in a black dress and a white tucker and a long string of black beads. We followed her into Pearl's room. She was conscious, and Little Brother went and knelt by the bed. I stood there, and I could n't help noticing, Cousin Jane, there was lace on everything, even to the very sheets, and pink silk under white for the pillow-slips, just like a girl's party dresses. Then the poor, heart-broken boy said to me, 'Sister, this is my Pearl,' and all the time those violins crying downstairs sounded like babies wailing 'way off in the dark and the rain, though they meant it to be a waltz, I reckon.

"Then Little Brother said, 'Pearl, sister says she will take the baby and care for it, and it shall never lack for anything I can give it.'

"She looked up into my eyes a long time, and then said, waiting long whiles between each word, 'You—are—a—good—woman, and, maybe, you will help my baby to be one too.'

"We waited, and when she had rested some she said, 'Bring my little girl to me, Harry.' She said 'Harry,' and her aunt called him 'Handsome Harry'; that's what they called him everywhere, she said. And he brought the baby and laid it by her, and she rubbed her hand over its hair—such little brown silky curls—and said, 'Kitten, kitten, such a fuzzy little kitten,' and we've called her Kitten ever since. Don't you think it's pretty?"

"Yes, oh, yes, mighty pretty—till it reaches cathood!"

Ignoring the comment, for she was accustomed to her cousin's peevish temperament, Miss Lydia resumed her recital: "Then the poor little child—for child Pearl was, Cousin Jane, only nineteen and so much to live for—"

A significant sniff from Cousin Jane showed she had noted this point.

"She said, 'I don't seem to mind dying much'—though not in a religious way, it seemed, as I had to tell our pastor. And she asked me, 'You will name her for me, won't you?' and when I said, 'Yes, of course, my dear,' though her mind seemed clear, she said, 'I want her called Magdalene,' but she must have been delirious, for her own name was Pearl.

"What is it? No, I didn't see Cousin Julia at all; I had thought I would let her know, but Henry said he would rather I didn't. You know he has so much delicacy; he hated to obtrude his grief even on a member of his own family. He didn't even let her know of Pearl's illness. They seemed to have mighty poor neighbors; no one sent to inquire. I could but think of our old friends here in Summerfield, who would have sent in more calves-foot jelly on such an occasion than the whole family could dispose of. When it was all over, no one sent a flower or asked to be allowed to watch the night with us.

"Only one carriage to follow her to the grave! Her aunt seemed deeply affected, and lost control of her emotions so entirely that Little Brother thought best for him and me to go alone. It was raining quite hard, and he insisted on my remaining in the carriage, but he stood by the grave with his head uncovered until it was all done.

"On the white stone cross he had erected," said Miss Lydia, with an air of having used the right word, "there was only one word,
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cut deep into it: 'Pearl.' No other name or date; Little Brother was always so exquisite in his tastes, and hated ostentatious parade.

"Yes," she resumed; "Henry has changed right much in appearance. He carried a good deal more flesh, and is even a little bald. You can remember, Cousin, his beautiful pink and white complexion. Well, city life has almost ruined it. Last time he was here I prepared him a nice glass of new milk, with a tablespoonful of sulphur in it, and brought it to him before breakfast—Ma's old spring remedy, you know, and mighty easy to take if you shut your eyes and hold your nose and don't think what's coming—but he did n't seem to relish it.

"No, we don't see very much of him. He comes up sometimes to see the Kitten, as he calls her, but he never goes out anywhere. You know, the truth is, Cousin Jane, I don't think the people in Summerfield—even our old neighbors—ever really appreciated Little Brother."

"You are mistaken there, Lydia Ann. I have known Henry from his cradle days, and I have appreciated him fully. But there's Jim at the gate, and those sorrel colts won't stand a minute."



THE ROCK-FLOWER

BY JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

DOWN on the cold gray rocks hard by the sea,
Where earth is bare and bleak, with ne'er a tree
Or blade of grass to show that 'mid the strife
Is aught that bears resemblance unto life,
I found the other day a blossom fair
That peeped from out a jagged crevice there,
And held its head as high as any rose
That in the soft earth of my garden grows;
Serene 'mid those surroundings, dull and gray,
As any lily was its snow-white spray,
It viewed the sea, the rocks, the rugged coast,
As though this were the spot it loved the most,
And uncomplaining lived its little hour
As if 't were in some well-protected bower
Wherein all joy and hope fulfilled were blent
With harmony, and peace, and sweet content.

'T was like a word divine sent forth on high,
A whisper faint as some half-hearted sigh,
But thrilling to the soul enmeshed in care
With thoughts of hope to overcome despair!

THE LUST OF CONQUEST

By Rafael Sabatini

CESARE BORGIA lay at Soligno with his army, master of the whole territory of Foggia, with the sole exception of the capital itself, which, grim and impregnable, defied him from its eminence. Cesare was too good a captain to be in haste where haste must prove expensive. Soligno afforded him pleasant quarters, and these he was content to enjoy what time Famine did his work for him with the defiant town.

In Foggia itself, one evening of early autumn, the old Count Guido degli Speranzoni sat in council with his captains considering the desperate straits to which Cesare had reduced them, a consideration which brought them nothing but the gloom of hopelessness.

"There is one course only can save Foggia," said del Campo, and when they pressed him to name that course, "The death of Cesare Borgia," he explained.

Men shrugged their shoulders. Del Campo told them nothing that they did not know, but he told them something they could not achieve.

"I would," growled Speranzoni, his fierce old eyes narrowing most wickedly—"I would I had him here in Foggia." And his wrinkled hand, held out palm upwards, tightened without closing, like an eagle's talons, ready to seize and rend.

"You 'll have him soon enough," snapped Paviano, who inclined to grimness in his humor.

"Aye, when he comes in power, you mean," the Lord of Foggia assented sadly. "Not so mean I. I would have him seized at Soligno where he lies, and brought a captive here to be held for ransom. Thus might I save the State." He looked about him at the despondent ones who formed his council. "Is there none will attempt it for the love of Foggia?" he asked point-blank.

In his captains' faces, one and all, he read that he asked the impossible, and he turned as for sympathy to his daughter, his only child and heiress to the State of Foggia, who in that quality was present among those men in council. Her splendid beauty inspired in him a fresh line of intercession. He turned once more to his captains.

"Is there none will do it for the love of Eufemia degli Speranzoni?" quoth he, and caught in more than one pair of eyes a responsive gleam. "It were but fitting," he explained, "that Foggia's savior in such an hour should be Foggia's future ruler—my daughter's future husband."

Del Campo, young, ardent, and ambitious, looked as he would make the task his own; Paviano, too, though far from young, seemed on the point of taking up the challenge, and two or three besides. But it was Guido's daughter, herself, who was the first to speak.

"What you say, my lord father, is most just," said she. "Foggia's future ruler should be Foggia's savior in this hour, and so she shall be."

"You, Eufemia?" cried her sire, wheeling in his chair to face her.

She stood before them, magnificently tall and graceful, her bosom heaving slightly, the color ebbing and flowing in her cheeks.

"Yes, I," she answered without weakness. "Here is a task that asks for guile, not strength. Let it be mine to attempt it."

Loud-voiced protests filled the room. All the men had risen, and each swore this must not be.

"But the danger!" wailed her sire, raising shaking hands and fearful eyes.

"Will not be as the danger to del Campo or Paviano or any other of these noble gentlemen. I shall know how to guard myself. Depend upon me."

When Count Guido spoke of her as Foggia's future ruler, he was less than accurate; for she ruled there already, and what Madonna Eufemia degli Speranzoni wanted none might long gainsay her. And she prevailed now as she prevailed ever, and if when she left Foggia in the dead of night she left behind a loving dread for her, she left, too, a certain hopefulness, for men knew and had confidence in her mettle and her wit.

Soligno conquered—and all trace of conquest sedulously removed, as was the way of Cesare Borgia—was settling down to its workaday aspect. In what, after all, can one ruler differ intrinsically from another to the ruled? Though princes perish, thrones crumble, and dynasties be supplanted, citizens must live and eat and go about their business. Thus, whilst some remained in Soligno who scowled as Cesare Borgia, Duke of Valentinois, went abroad, the greater portion bared their heads and bowed their duty to the conqueror, the great captain who had made it his life's task to build a mighty empire out of all the petty tyrannies into which Italy was broken.

One fair morning in late August Cesare rode down the Borgo

dell'Annunziata, the centre of a group of horsemen, mostly young, all richly-apparelled, and seeming by their talk and laughter in the gayest mood. Debouching from a narrow street into the market-place—thronged now with traders as in time of peace—the little cavalcade was met by another coming in the opposite direction and very different of appearance, all being in harness and full-armed. At its head rode Don Miguel—Cesare's Spanish captain—and he alone was without armor, dressed in clumsy peasant garb, for he was newly returned from a secret visit to the city of Foggia, where he had spent the last three days reconnoitring the strength of the besieged and their supplies. He now drew rein, that he might give his master the fruits of his daring expedition.

The horsemen, mingling what time Don Miguel and Duke Cesare talked apart, so blocked the entrance to the street that a litter advancing towards it from the market-place was forced to halt and wait until its way should be clear again.

Don Miguel was talking earnestly, urging Cesare to make assault upon a point at which he fancied weakness—for all that he was seldom a man to advocate measures rough and direct. Cesare listened, half-idly, nowise inclined to be guided by his counsel, and allowing his eyes to stray, as do the eyes of a man not over-engrossed in what is being told him. They chanced to fall upon the litter, and what he saw there caught his roving glance and held it. A curtain had been drawn aside, and at the very moment that he looked he saw an elderly woman pointing him out—or so it seemed to him—to her companion. It was this elderly dame's companion whose splendid beauty now engrossed his gaze, and in that instant her eyes, large and solemn as a child's, were raised. Their glances met across the little intervening space, and the Duke saw her lips part as in surprise, saw the color perish in her cheeks, leaving them ivory-white. In homage, not to the woman, but to the beauty that was hers—for, like all of his race, he accounted beauty the most cardinal of all virtues—the conqueror doffed his hat and bowed to the very withers of his horse.

Checked in the middle of his argument, Don Miguel frowned at this proof of inattention, and frowned more darkly still when to show the extent of that same inattention Cesare asked him softly:

“Who is that lady? Do you know?”

The Spaniard turned to look; but in that moment the curtains fell again. Cesare, a smile on his lips, heaved a soft sigh and then fell very pensive, pondering the element of abnormality, slight as it was, that the incident had offered. He had been pointed out to her, and at sight of him she had turned pale. What was the reason? He could not recollect that he had ever seen her before, and had he seen her, hers was not a face he would be likely to forget. Why, then,

did the sight of him affect her in so odd a manner. Many men had turned pale before him—aye, and women too—but there had always been a reason. What was the reason here?

Don Miguel's escort had drawn aside, leaving a passage clear, through which the litter and its attendants were now passing. Cesare's eye went after it awhile, then he turned again to Miguel.

"We'll talk of this again," said he. "Meanwhile, follow me that litter, and bring me word where its occupant resides." With that, Cesare pushed on, his cavaliers about him; but he went thoughtful, still pondering that question: Why did she turn pale?

The reason, had he known it, might have flattered him. Madonna Eufemia had come to Soligno to destroy by guile one whom she had ever heard described as an odious monster, the devastator of all Italy, another scourge of God, more worthy of the name than Attila himself. She had looked to find a horror of a man, hideous, malformed, prematurely aged, and ravaged by disease and the wrath of Heaven. Instead, she beheld a youthful cavalier, resplendent of raiment, magnificent, though slight, of shape, and beautiful of countenance beyond all men that she had ever seen. The glory of his eyes when she had found them full upon her had seemed to turn her faint and dizzy. Nor did she recover until the curtain fell again, and she bethought her that, however superb and gallant his appearance, he was the enemy of her race, the man whose destruction it was her high mission to encompass as she stood pledged.

The litter moved forward. She reclined with half-closed eyes, smiling to herself as she remembered how avid had been his gaze. It was well.

"Madonna, we are being followed," whispered her companion fearfully.

Eufemia's smile grew broader, more content. The affair was speeding excellently.

She was housed in the palace that had been Paviano's, in the Via del Cane, hard by the Duomo; and thrice that day her women brought her word that the Lord Cesare Borgia had ridden by, all eyes upon the windows. Towards sunset she bade a lackey set a chair for her in the marble balcony that overlooked the street, and there on the occasion of his fourth passing the great captain beheld her seated, taking the cool of eventide what time one of her women read to her.

She had no eyes for him at first; they were turned skyward, a rapt expression on her face, as though her soul were lost in the exquisite melody of words which her woman was pouring forth for her delectation. Anon, however, she seemed to grow conscious of his presence, and looked down to find that he had reined in his jennet and sat considering her, his auburn head bared in homage as though

he stood before a shrine, his glorious eyes full of strange wonder. As their glances met, he bowed low, as he had done that morning; and she, mastering the odd emotions stirring in her, smiled palely down on him in recognition. As if content with that, he gently shook his reins; his horse moved on, and she fancied she caught the flutter of a sigh—but that was surely fancy. Slowly he rode down the street, turning as he went ever and anon to look over his shoulder, nor covering his head again until he did so in a final gesture of salutation ere he was lost to her view beyond the corner.

On each of the three days that followed was this pretty scene repeated, and on the fourth there came at noon a dainty page to Paviano's house, bearing a scented letter in the Duke's own hand, wherein the latter craved like the humblest suitor for the honor of permission to offer in person his services to Madonna Eufemia Guasti—for by this name she had elected to be known, giving out that she was the daughter of a rich Venetian trader.

This permission being accorded, the Borgia came some few hours later, and, leaving his splendid cavalcade to await him in the street, he went alone into her presence. He came superbly arrayed, as a suitor should; his doublet was of cloth of gold, milk-white one silken hose, sky-blue the other, and the girdle from which his sword was hung blazed with priceless stones.

She received him in a chamber well worthy of his magnificence, and for company she had none but Basilia—her elderly companion of the litter. Tightly strung to her task though she be, yet she feasted her eyes upon the rare beauty of his resplendent presence, nor repelled the dangerous rapture that his haunting eyes and soft melodious voice awakened in her.

They sat awhile in studied talk, flavored with hints of his regard for her, and her wonder grew at the difference between the man she saw and the ogre she had looked for; he was, she had been told, a creature whose soul was all compounded of intelligence and ambition; harsh, unscrupulous, terrible to friend and foe alike; a man devoid of heart, and devoid, therefore, of pity or of mercy. She found him gentle, respectful, mildly gay, and of a rare sweetness of speech, till she was forced to ask herself might not envy of his great generalship be the only source of the detestation in which he was held by those upon whom he warred.

Wine was brought by a page, golden Falernian in an exquisitely wrought Venetian vessel, from which with her own hands she poured it into two cups of beaten gold.

“It is most opportune,” said he, his voice calm and deferential, “that I may pledge you.”

She flushed as if well pleased, and, taking one cup, she bade her

page to offer him the other. At that some of the passion latent in him, at which, as if despite him, his ardent glance had hinted now and again, seemed to leap forth. He repulsed the cup. "Nay, nay!" said he, his great eyes full upon her, their glance seeming to envelop and hold her as in a spell. "Let one cup suffice, I do beseech you, madonna, unworthy though I be. Pledge me, and leave me wine in which to pledge you in my turn."

She would have put the honor from her as too great—for not until Basilia told her afterwards did she suspect that this was less a measure of gallantry than precaution. Cesare Borgia took no risks of being poisoned. She protested then; but Borgia insisted, and his will made sport with hers as does the breeze in autumn with the withered leaf.

She drank, and handed him the cup. He received it with bent knee, as though it were a sacrament, and drained it, his eyes upon her.

He took his departure soon thereafter, having first obtained her leave to come again. When he was gone she shivered, and sank limp into a chair, to fall a-weeping for no reason in the world that she could fathom. Yet that night she wrote to the Count, her father, that all was going better than she could have dared to hope, and that within the week she looked to place that in his hands which should enable him to end the siege of Foggia.

At that same night, in council at Soligno, there was a scene that threatened to grow stormy. Cesare's captains, urged by the arguments of Ramiro del'Orca, complained of the inaction in which they sat, of the precious time that was being wasted, and clamored that Foggia forthwith be taken by assault.

"It will be costly in human lives," Cesare reminded them, and left them stricken by the softness of this contention from one who was so little wont to reckon in lives the cost of what he desired.

"Will it be less costly a week hence?" quoth the great Ramiro, snorting.

"Assuredly," was the smooth reply. "Famine will have weakened their resistance, we shall have completed our mining of the wall at the spot where Don Miguel found it weakened, and through the breach we can pour our men into a starving city that will be in no case to offer us resistance, seeing us within."

"And what of the time that is being lost?" Ramiro asked.

Cesare shrugged, and his lips parted in a soft smile. "It will pass pleasantly enough, no doubt, here in Soligno," said he.

"Aye!" thundered the other. "There is the whole truth and cause of this delay." He smote the board a blow of his colossal fist; his great red face grew apoplectic; his rolling eyes seemed shot with blood. "The time passes pleasantly enough for your magnificence here in Soligno." And he laughed most horridly. "Meanwhile——"

"Meanwhile," Cesare's voice interrupted him, his words falling like drops of icy water upon the captain's red-hot temper—"meanwhile Ravenna needs a temporary governor. You shall fill the office, Ser Ramiro, until I can spare a better man. You start to-night."

To the contempt implicit in Cesare's words, Ramiro gave no thought. His dismissal at such a moment from the seat of war left his spirit limp as an empty bag. Recovering an instant, he flushed and spread a hand in protest.

"My lord—" he began. But again he was not suffered to proceed. From mask-like in its impassivity, Cesare's face was of a sudden stirred. His eyes narrowed.

"Captain del'Orca," said he, "you are interrupting the business of this council. If you have aught to say to me, say it when I come to Ravenna in a fortnight's time. Fare you well."

He uttered no threat, as another might have done; he did not so much as raise his voice; but the menace quivering, nevertheless, in his even tones was such that the great captain heaved himself up, bowed low, and went without another word.

Thus departed from Soligno the only spirit great enough to have saved Cesare from the peril that delay was spreading for him. The remainder, cowed by the Duke's invincible resolve, and by the example he had made of the one who had dared oppose it, bowed to his will in the matter of the reduction of Foggia.

Days passed, and for Cesare, at least, it seemed that they passed pleasantly, as he had promised that they should. He was so much at the house of Paviano, at the feet of the peerless Monna Eufemia Guasti, that it seemed his court had been removed thither from the castle. For Eufemia herself, the season was one of sore experience. In his absence she laid her plans for his ultimate capture, in correspondence with her father; in his presence she was all numb, fascinated, filled with horror almost by her task, the very creature of his will.

At last was reached that fateful evening that had been settled for the odious deed. He came at twilight, as was now his wont, and kissed her hand in greeting, as was also his custom now. The windows of the great apartment in which she met him stood open to the gardens, and thither he invited her to go with him before he had been two minutes in her presence.

"It is chill," she demurred, "and there is the dew." Slight though this demur, so great was her subjection to him that her heart-beats quickened as she urged it.

He sighed heavily. "I am oddly oppressed to-night," said he. "I have need of air. Come, my Eufemia." And he took her hand to lead her forth.

She shivered at his endearment, at the soft caress of his voice, the

pleading ardor of his eyes, and suffered herself to be led into the open. Slowly they paced down a laurel-bordered avenue towards the grotto that was the garden's most conspicuous feature. It was known as the temple of Pan, and the marble figure of the sylvan god could be descried gleaming faintly amid the green darkness of the cave. In a little clearing opposite stood a marble bench. Here Cesare bade her sit; here he seated himself beside her, and, as before, he sighed.

"It is sweet in you to have done my will," said he, "since it is to be my last evening with you, my Eufemia."

She started guiltily. His last evening! How knew he that?

"As how, my lord?" she asked.

"Harsh necessity commands me," he answered. "To-morrow we deliver the final assault that shall carry Foggia."

Here was news. It seemed that not a moment too soon had she arranged to act.

"You—are certain it will be final?" she questioned, puzzled by his assurance.

He smiled confidently. "You shall judge," said he. "There is a weakness in the walls, to the north, above the river, spied out a week ago by Don Miguel. Since then we have spent the time in mining at the spot, and there has been during this week an odd lack of vigilance in Foggia. It is as a town lulled by some false hope. It has served us well. Our preparations are complete, and at dawn we fire the mine and enter through the breach."

"So that I shall see you no more," said she, feeling that something she must say. And then, whether urged by make-believe or by sheer femininity, she continued: "Will you ever think again, I wonder, when you pass on to further conquests, of poor Eufemia and her loneliness in Soligno?"

He turned sharply, and his calm eyes looked deeply into hers—so deeply that she grew afraid, thinking he must see the truth in the very soul of her. And then, behind them somewhere, there was a crunch of gravel, and Cesare was looking over his shoulder in the direction of the sound. Across the avenue at that moment a shadow flitted and was lost amid the denser shadows of the laurels. Apparently he either saw it not or left it unheeded, for he turned again to Eufemia, who sat cold with terror. He leaned towards her.

"Shall I come back to you, Eufemia?" he asked her ardently, his eyes upon her, his arms outstretched. "Would you have it so?"

Again their glances met, and she turned almost dizzy under those eyes of his, instinct with a mysterious passion that seemed to enwrap her as in a mesh of fire. She swayed towards him. "My lord! My dear lord!" she murmured, faltering. His arms were round her, crushing her slender body against his own, his lips were scorching

hers. Thus a moment; then with a panting cry, her palms against his breast, she thrust him from her.

"What now?" he asked her gently, wondering.

"You love me?" quoth she. Then begged him: "Say that you love me!"

"What else?" he answered, questioning in his turn, his hungry arms held out again.

"Wait! Wait!" she panted. She was livid now; her eyes distraught. Suddenly she hid her face in her hands, and fell a-sobbing. "Oh, I am vile!" she cried. "I am most vile!"

"What are you saying, sweet?"

As suddenly as she had lost it did she regain her self-control. "You shall learn," she promised him. "Awhile ago you heard a step behind us. Assassins wait you in the garden there—brought here by my contriving!"

He never stirred. Smiling, he continued to look down upon her, and it flashed through her mind that, so great was his faith in her, he could not believe this thing she told him.

"I was sent hither," she informed him, "to lure you into capture, that you may be held as hostage for the safety of all Foggia."

He seemed slightly to shake his head, his smile enduring still. "All this being so, why do you tell me?"

"Why?" she cried, her eyes dilating in her white face. "Why? Do you not see? Because I love you, Cesare, and can no longer do the thing I came for."

Save a sigh, that seemed to be of satisfaction, there was still no change in his demeanor; his smile, if anything, grew sweeter. She was prepared for horror, for anger, or for loathing from him; but for nothing so terrible as this calm, fond smile. She drew away from it in fascinated terror, as she would not have drawn away from his poniard had he made shift to kill her for her treachery. Sick and faint she reclined there, uttering no word.

Then, smiling still, Cesare rose quietly and moved a step in the direction of the alley, the zone of danger. It became clear to her that he was going; going without a word of reproach or comment; and the contempt of it was as a whip of scorpions to her flesh.

"Have you naught to say?" she wailed.

"Naught," he answered, pausing.

Under the spur of pain her anger rose. "My men are still there," she reminded him, a lurking fierceness in her quivering voice.

His answer seemed to shatter her wits. "So, too, are mine, Eufemia degli Speranzoni."

Crouching on the bench, she stared at him. She swallowed hard with a gulping sound. "You knew?" she breathed.

"From the hour I met you," answered he. "Don Miguel had penetrated into Foggia to reconnoitre. When your litter passed me in the Via del Cane I sent him after it. He had seen you at your father's palace."

"Then—then—why?" she faltered, leaving her meaning to be guessed.

At last his voice was raised from its habitual even tones, and it rang like stricken bronze. "The lust of conquest," he answered, smiling fiercely now. "Should I who have brought all Italy to heel fail to reduce me Count Guido's daughter?" He leaned towards her as he explained, and his voice sank once more, but a bitter mockery abode in it. "I was resolved to win this fight against you and your woman's arts, myself; and your confession, when it came, should be the admission that I am conqueror in your heart as I am elsewhere. For the rest," he added, and the mockery grew keener, "such was their faith in you at Foggia that they relaxed their vigilance and afforded me the chance I needed to prepare the mine." He gathered his cloak about him to depart, doffed his hat, and made her an obeisance. She rose painfully, one hand to her brow, the other to her heart.

"And I, my lord?" she asked in a strangled voice. "What fate do you reserve for me?"

He considered her in the fading light. "Lady," said he, "I leave you to your own."

He beat his hands together thrice. There was a rustle among the laurel bushes, and a half-dozen men came down the garden towards him. He addressed their leader shortly. "Amedeo," said he, "you will apprehend what men are ambushed here."

One glance he cast at the white, crouching figure on the seat; then he turned and without haste departed.

Next morning Foggia fell, and Cesare, the conqueror, sat in the palace of the Speranzoni.

COGITATIONS

No man ever accuses himself of hypocrisy. This fact alone makes many of us hypocrites.

A HOLIDAY is a time when city folks go to the city and city folks go to the country.

CREDIT is a good thing until it becomes merely an excuse for spending the same dollar twice.

Ellis O. Jones

TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS

By Thomas L. Masson

WHIPPLETON had been expecting the settlement of his uncle's estate for so long, that it had become an old story. He had almost forgotten to think about it.

Suddenly, one morning, shortly after he had entered his office, he received a telephone message from his uncle's lawyers. He dropped everything and went down to see them.

Fifteen minutes later he was on his way back, in his pocket a certified check for one hundred thousand dollars. Such is the celerity with which, in these days, business affairs are conducted.

When Whippleton arrived at his office, almost bursting with joy over his good fortune, he found his old friend Salter waiting for him. Salter looked worried.

"Dropped in to see you this morning," he said, "on a matter of great importance to me. Don't suppose it's any use, but I am really in a bad way."

"What's the matter?" asked Whippleton, his voice full of sympathy. At that moment he was feeling kindly toward all the world. He hadn't had time to readjust himself to the new conditions. Besides, he had known Salter for years, and had every confidence in him.

Salter explained that, owing to an unexpected turn in his business affairs, due to the failure of a mill, he was temporarily embarrassed. He could pull through, he said, if he had ten thousand dollars.

"Of course I know," he concluded, "that you probably can't do anything for me, but I thought perhaps you could suggest some place where I could get the money."

Whippleton smiled. It pleased him intensely to be a good fairy.

"My dear boy," he said, with a wave of his hand, "I think I can help you out. I'll give you a check."

Salter gasped.

"You don't mean it!"

Whippleton was writing it out.

"Yes, I do. Here it is. You can deposit it to-day, but don't try to cash it until to-morrow, as I must make a deposit first."

"I don't know how to thank you."

"Nonsense! Delighted!"

"Let's see. How long—"

Whippleton waved his hand again.

"Oh, that's all right," he said carelessly. It was really a pleasure to help his friend, in addition to the fact that it tickled Whippleton's vanity immensely.

"No hurry," he exclaimed. "You can send me a demand note if you like, as a matter of record."

"I'll do it! Old fellow, you have saved my business. I can't thank you enough."

"Don't mention it," said Whippleton, in an off-hand manner, as if he were in the habit of dealing out ten-thousand-dollar checks to his friends.

Brimming with gratitude, Salter went out, and Whippleton hurried over to his bank to make the deposit.

He was acquainted with the cashier, a man who enjoyed the confidence of the community.

Whippleton told of his good fortune, and inquired about investments.

"Here is a bond selling at ninety-eight," said the cashier, "that I can thoroughly recommend. It is a first mortgage, and a lien on all the property"

He gave a short description of the bond and its possibilities, and explained about the condition of the market. Whippleton listened attentively, and said:

"Very well. I am satisfied. You may buy ninety thousand dollars' worth of these bonds at the market price."

"That will be around ninety. Very well. I will notify you when they are delivered."

When Whippleton got home that night, he wore a quiet smile, which was not utterly lost on his wife.

"You seem pleased with yourself."

Whippleton explained, losing nothing in the telling.

"Yes," he said; "I had the pleasure of buying ninety thousand dollars' worth of bonds to-day, and—"

"I thought you said the check was for a hundred thousand," said Mrs. Whippleton sharply.

He had n't intended to mention the Salter transaction, but his joy had made him rather careless.

"What did you do with the other ten thousand?" she pressed him.

"I lent it to Salter," said Whippleton, with an assumption of indifference which he did not feel.

"Lent it to Salter!"

"Yes. Was n't it lucky I could help him out? Needed it badly

to tide over his business. Mill failed. I knew you'd be tickled to death to think I *could* help him."

Mrs. Whippleton was not so easily fooled by this statement. She knew it proceeded from weakness—and fear of herself.

"Um!" she exclaimed. "You ought to have a guardian. You'll never see that ten thousand again."

"What do you mean? Salter is as honest as the day is long."

"Of course," replied Mrs. Salter satirically; "he *means* to pay it back, but *you wait*. Just think," she went on: "you had one hundred thousand, and now you have n't but ninety."

Somehow, during the next week, that cutting phrase sank into Whippleton's consciousness more and more:

"*You had one hundred thousand, and now you have n't but ninety.*"

By return mail, he had received from Salter a note which stated formally that the sum of ten thousand dollars was payable on demand.

On demand.

That was a temporary consolation. But the feeling of security proceeding from it soon lost itself.

Whippleton found himself inquiring in various quarters about Salter; and the more he inquired, the more uneasy he became.

His wife did not spare him.

And he might have had that hundred thousand intact!

It was a distressing thought. It gathered impetus. It came to possess him utterly. He determined to get that money back. He cursed himself inwardly to think he had been so weak as to give it up so easily. And then he experienced a revengeful feeling towards Salter to think that that innocent gentleman should have taken advantage of him, by appearing on the scene at such a critical moment. Twenty-four hours more and he would have regained his balance—gotten back, as they say in books, to his normal self.

He determined to get that money. He would vindicate himself with his wife.

At the end of a week he dropped in to see Salter. That gentleman greeted him effusively.

"You did a great thing for me," he said. "Can't tell you how I feel about it."

"Oh, that's all right," said Whippleton feebly. He had come along with the intention of being firm, but his friend's manner unmanned him. He resorted to prevarication.

"The fact is," he whispered, "when I let you have that money the other day I was feeling flush. Since then things have gone rather against me."

Salter's eyes almost filled with tears. He was teeming with gratitude and affection for his friend.

"I'm sorry to hear that," he exclaimed. "I suppose you would like to get that money back."

His face grew solemn.

"I don't know just exactly—" he began.

Whippleton stopped him.

"Oh, it is n't quite as bad as that," he said. "I would n't put you to any inconvenience. Only—"

He began to grow confidential again.

"You see, I am looking ahead a little, and am going to make certain arrangements in the future, and I thought if we could arrange on a date, it would be easier for both of us."

What Whippleton really meant was that he wanted to pin Salter down, but did n't want him to know the real reason.

"How would three months from now do?" Whippleton asked with an appearance of vagueness.

"I think I can manage it then. Why, I *must* manage it then, of course," said Salter. "After what you have done, old man, I certainly would n't put you out. All right." And he wrote out another note, making it three months from date.

"You can destroy the other one."

Whippleton went away somewhat relieved. He wished, now, that he had made it two months. Every moment until he got back that ten thousand seemed precious. Still, three months was better than no time set. He tried to be philosophical about it, even though his wife continued to rally him on his incompetence.

"Like to see you let *me* have ten thousand to lend to any friend of mine," she said tauntingly. "Why, you'd laugh in my face."

As the day of settlement approached, Whippleton grew more and more nervous—especially as there had been an ominous silence from Salter.

Promptly at ten o'clock on the morning when the note was due, however, Salter appeared in the office. It had been a great effort on Whippleton's part to restrain his anxiety, and he had been tempted to call up his friend a number of times. Now he was glad that he had n't.

Salter's face was worn and haggard. He looked like a ghost.

"Old man," he said, "I would n't have disappointed you for anything, and I have that money; only—"

He gazed at Whippleton despairingly.

"Must you have it now?" he whispered.

Whippleton was now almost as abnormal as he had been on the morning he had loaned the money—only it was in the opposite direction. It seemed to him he could n't wait to get his hands on that ten thousand dollars.

"I really don't see how I can get along without it," he replied. "Of course"—taking refuge in a cowardly misstatement—"if you had let me know a week or so ago, I might—"

"I thought I might pull through, but the last day or so some complications have risen. Oh, well, I won't bother you with my troubles. Here is the check. Deposit it at once, will you? And I can't tell you"—Salter's voice quivered—"how much obliged to you I am."

Whippleton hated to take the money, but he thought of his wife.

"I certainly wish," he said, "that I could let you have it longer. Maybe by and by—"

"Oh, that's all right," said Salter. "It was a bargain. Besides," he exclaimed, "don't you suppose I know you would do it if you could? Did n't you let me have it on the instant before? Oh, I know you've got to have it, or you would insist on my keeping it!"

He wrung his friend's hand.

"I shall always remember it," he said. "Now, don't you worry about me. I'm all right."

After he went, and Whippleton saw the check lying on his desk, he experienced a feeling of remorse. He would hurry after him and give it back. But no! He really had done Salter a favor. And then, if he waited, there was no knowing whether or not he would ever get his money back. Salter might be deeply involved. It might be a kindness to him *not* to let him have the money.

Thus Whippleton quieted his conscience, as he went around to the bank to make the deposit.

"I suppose you've noticed the way those bonds have gone up," said the cashier, his hand on Whippleton's shoulder. "Always glad when a customer makes money on our advice."

To be candid, Whippleton had not thought much about the bonds. He had been so concerned about his ten thousand that he had thought of little else.

"Why, I saw the other day they were three or four points higher," he said.

"Well, they have gone up six points in three days. Something extraordinary! But, then, the conditions are right. Why not sell out and take your profit, and then reinvest in something else a little later?"

Whippleton figured on the back of an envelope.

"Why, it's over ten thousand profit," he said. "They've gone up twelve points. All right. Sell 'em out."

In ten minutes the transaction was completed.

Whippleton hurried home, his exultation rising with each step.

At last his revenge on his wife had come. For months she had had the laugh on him.

Ha! And so he needed a guardian, eh? Well, well!

When they were alone over their coffee at the dinner table, he said smilingly:

"So you think I don't know anything, do you?"

"I sometimes think you make a fool of yourself. There was that money you lent to that man. And, by the way, is n't it time for him to pay it back? Of course you 'll never get it! Not now!"

"Oh, of course not," replied Whippleton, with a slight touch of satire in his voice. "*Oh, of course not!* And yet, strange to say, he not only paid me—by a genuine certified check—but I have also made a little extra money. That sum left to me, my dear girl, has swelled to one hundred and ten thousand dollars. Of course I 'm not a business man, and I may make a fool of myself lending money to a man whose word is as good as his bond; still, I *do* know a little something."

"Is that really true?"

"Here are the figures. I have just sold out, and cleared over ten thousand from some bonds. You see, my dear, you don't know it all."

"How could you!"

"What do you mean?"

"He paid you, did he?"

"Certainly; this morning—as he promised."

"How could you take it?"

"How could I take it! Why, have n't you been making all manner of fun of me for months because I lent him the money? And now you talk this way!"

Ignoring his remark, Mrs. Whippleton arose and picked up an evening paper lying on the table.

"How could you," she repeated, "especially when you knew he was going to fail!"

Whippleton jumped as if he had been shot.

"Fail!" he cried. "What do you mean? I have n't seen it."

"Well, I happened to. The name attracted my attention."

She pointed to a small paragraph which said that Salter & Company had assigned for the benefit of their creditors.

"I suppose you think," continued Mrs. Whippleton, "that you were lucky to get your money back; and yet—you were his friend."

"But I did n't know he was going to fail. He did n't say anything about it. He merely asked if I had to have the money."

"And"—scornfully—"you told him you had to, when you had just made a profit equal to the whole amount, from your old bonds. What despicable creatures you men are!"

Whippleton turned white in his pain.

"Why, hang it all!" he cried, "if I had been allowed to obey my own instincts, I should have let him have *twice* that amount. But you made fun of me, and sneered at me, and told me I was a fool."

"Well, I would n't go back on a friend," she said. "Dear me, you never will understand a woman, if you live to be a thousand years old. I—"

Whippleton waited to hear no more. He ran from the house, and in half an hour he was at Salter's.

"My dear fellow," he exclaimed, "why in the world did n't you tell me. I had no idea it was so bad."

He grabbed him by both shoulders, with manly affection.

"I did n't want to trouble you," said Salter. "I knew, of course, you would have helped me further if you could. I just got that check up to you before I assigned, so you would n't lose anything."

"And it finished you up, did n't it?"

"It was your money."

"But look here, I *can* help you out. Why, my dear friend, I can let you have twenty thousand to-morrow, if you say so. You must get on your feet again. Don't you worry. I'll stand by you even if—" Whippleton was reckless. He did n't care now.

"Even if it's *thirty* thousand!"

Salter's eyes glistened with new hope.

"You don't mean it!" he said. "But how can you do it? That's what I don't understand."

And Whippleton leaned over and whispered in reply:

"I did n't think I could this morning. But since then I've confided in my wife, and she says she can help me out."



REVEALED

BY IRENE STANLEY MARTIN

I HAD not anything to guess You by,
Dear God! How could I know the Infinite
By sunshine gilding eastern hills, while night
Still held my inner world and not one why
Of all my questioning lay hushed and stilled
In moulten light? And what to me the stars
In twinkling gladness set on high? Huge bars
Of mystery shut me from You, and filled
My soul with loneliness intense. But *Life*
Came close at last in *Love!* Horizons met
And stars stooped low to bring me every good.
Arms gathered me from out my fruitless strife,
To joy of being—not a limit set!
In *Love* You are revealed and understood.

GETTING BACK TO WORK

By Minna Thomas Antrim

IT'S good to be back; fine to think that, as of old, you are going to say "Hello!" to old Tom, to pat Dandy Dick's immaculate back, and to get a rise at lunch-time out of Harry about the "Great Big Fish" down Avalon way.

How the Spirit of Home gets into a fellow's veins the instant he strikes the old town! How good it looks to him; how more than any other spot under the canopy does it call to everything that is best in him! You have had a summer that beats all records: never such weather, such sailing, such piny breezes, such a sea; but from the bottom of your heart you are glad to get back. It is such a joy to feel the old harness as you tighten the buckles. You like the thought of "orders coming in"—that means hard work for weeks to come. You have still in your nostrils enough ozone to furnish adequate zest for months of hard labor. You beam upon your fellow workers, and the office boy. Even the janitor's face looks comely to you. As for the streets, they teem with delight. In the afternoon, as you walk homeward, you ask yourself, perkily pulling yourself up as you pass them, where upon His footstool could prettier girls be found? You are pleased to find that the Urchin has saved your evening paper for you. "Keep the change, Kiddy," you say, then call yourself ungentle names for making it a quarter instead of a nickel; but you are so all-fired happy, this your first after-vacation day, that you forgive yourself, promising faithfully not to let it happen again—until next year, at least.

What a glorious day it is! It beats you how any one can doubt that it took more than Man to mobilize the various elements for such an autumnal triumph. Apropos, you will go to church more; it's a bad thing to flunk one's religion. Not that you intend to qualify for a saint—the gods forbid!—but if a fellow believes in anything, he ought to fly The Colors at the appointed time, that's all.

Another thing you tell yourself you'll do, and you mean it *this* time, by Jove! You'll get into closer touch with your wife and the girls. You were a grouch just before they preceded you to the shore, and you know it. And why? Because, poor things, their monthly bills were necessarily steeper than usual. You have been thinking for years

about making them an allowance. Now you will do it, and at once. Each of the girls, and Mother, shall have their own incomes. The thought of their delight, especially that of the loyal little wife, thrills you to the additional decision to make them absolutely independent as to feminine "must haves." You can afford it, then why not? What you do for your friends you always do "*en princ*e." You'll do this correspondingly. You are proud of your family; you'll make them as proud of you.

Your eyes brighten, but, naturally, you don't know this, until good old Tom, your brother-in-law, runs into you and nearly un-hands you with his unholy paw. You make a noise like a bear, then tell him—you've got to tell some one, or bust—that his sister and the girls are going to lug around their own bank books in future, whereupon he gives you a look that warms you like a dry Manhattan. As he jumps on his car suddenly, you blink, then sing out, "Come around to-night," and he shouts, "Can't! We're going to the theatre;" then the unspeakable pay-as-you-enter trap closes upon the best fellow on earth—according to you.

As you amble along, you are so obsessed with this beatific idea of financially rewarding the very good, that into your head pops the notion of raising your stenographer's salary. She is a fine woman, capable as any man; loyal to the firm, and no longer young. She has plugged away at her machine all through the hot months, while you and yours have been having the time of your lives. You'll do it! You feel like a chump that you have not done it before. You are not a philanthropist, not apt to mingle business with sentiment, nary a time if you know it, but right's right, and that woman should have had more money for a year past. She's earned it; she's going to have it, too.

Yourself? Well, you are going to hustle. You are going to let your competitors see your heels oftener than your face. You are still young, only forty-five, and feel like a two-year-old loose in an oat-field near running water. Yes, you are going to make a pot of money, and, incidentally, to make a more vigorous try for worth-while citizenship. You have let business own you body and soul; now you intend to own it. You are going to interest yourself actively in all things that will enhance the prestige of your city, and when you can do so, tellingly, you are going to speak out loud in meeting for the civic good and— By Jupiter! you are home—already.

As you open the door, you see away back into the dining-room. How cozy it looks! How homy! The rose-shaded candles are lighted. Succulent odors steal forth faintly but perceptibly, and blend with merry woman laughter. Your home-coming joy is complete.

THE PROLONGED HALLOWE'EN

By Caroline Wood Morrison

MOREL SHANDON rose early the morning after Hallowe'en, and his father smiled to hear kindling being split at dawn. While breakfasting, the boy's hair dripped from recent friction with a wet brush, and the back of both his hands showed nearly clean.

"Have a pretty good time last night, sonny?" asked his father, drawing deductions.

"Morel was not among that crowd," his mother said, making an exclamation-point of her thin-lipped mouth. "*My* boy was in bed by half-past eight. I saw to that."

Morel ate fast and kept silence. Mr. Shandon choked over his coffee. His wife gave him a withering glance.

"It would have been like you, Sam Shandon," she accused acidly, "to have been out there helping those budding criminals."

"Come, now, mother, hardly so bad as that," he murmured pacifically.

"What I mind, what every good citizen takes to heart," pursued Mrs. Shandon, somewhat in the manner of an oration, "is the indifference shown by the city council to disgraceful and disorderly conduct. You men could stop it, but, I'd like to ask you, has there ever been an arrest in this town for Hallowe'en pranks? Has there?"

"The—the boys tie handkerchiefs over their faces," protested Mr. Shandon weakly.

"Oh, do they? Of course no man could penetrate such a disguise. I want to tell you that this farce has got to stop. I give you and the rest of the city council fair warning. We have formed a Good Order Society, we women and a few *right-minded* men, and we mean to protest against the breaking of law and order in Fairview!"

"My best wishes flock with you. What is the *modus operandi*?" asked Mr. Shandon, taking to Latin in defense of his dignity as one of the councilmen in contempt.

His wife regarded him triumphantly. "We're going to let the

gates hang in trees, leave the old wagon on the roof of the shed, and porch chairs hung on telegraph poles—we're going to leave them!"

Peculiar sounds from Morel drew a keen look, but Mr. Shandon rushed to the rescue with—

"Sneezing again, sonny? I thought your cold was broken up."

"I closed his window myself last night," said Mrs. Shandon. "He could n't have slept in a draft. Go and roast an onion at once, Morel. It's the best remedy in the world."

Morel obeyed with unaccustomed alacrity. Once out from under the maternal eye, he rolled in ecstasy on the kitchen floor. Would the town really remain delightfully, side-splittingly topsyturvy all the year, a prolonged Hallowe'en joke? Nothing so delicious could possibly occur.

But it did! The Good Order Society was potent in Fairview. Against its dictum no mere man ventured so much as to remove his chicken-fence from his neighbor's chimney. Miss Treice, the president, went so far as to insist that her front door remain fastened with the paling from the Shandon fence, taking company around the back way while she volubly explained:

"I want the men to have a good look at this work of law-breakers and get enough of it. Let 'em see their town now in the condition to which their neglect is reducing it!"

There were mothers who looked askance at the sons of other mothers, but if any harbored doubts of her own boy, she locked suspicion in an indignant breast and grimly set her face in defiance of "that pusillanimous city council."

The boys chuckled, roared behind house-corners, giggled under public opinion, and had the time of their lives.

The Indian summer, sweet with nuts, persimmons, early apples, blue haze, and blushing tree-tops, witnessed, day by day, old gray gates sagging from high branches. Deacon Mason's chicken-coop stood on the Shandons' front porch (rash were the hand that dare remove it!). A garbage-can swung from the town's one arc-light. Dr. Betts stormily demanded that the undertaker's sign be removed from his door, but his own wife refused the concession. "Mother" Pickens was more successful in her appeal when she loudly complained:

"I done paid a dollar for that thar notice, 'Lye For Sale Here,' and I wants it took off Lawyer Mayo's winder and brought home. I needs it."

Lawyer Mayo, under cover of darkness, returned the property.

The fun had lasted several weeks, and disorder had almost to order grown, so accustomed were they all to topsyturvydom, when a change came, on a day, to the spirit of the boys. Muddy feet were scraped

noisily and carefully. Again Morel split kindling in the early hours. (His *confrères* were likewise employed.)

"Mother dear," said the Shandon scion at breakfast, his hair polished, his tie almost straight, "the Danville High School team is coming to play ours next week."

"Well, don't you get hurt in a horrid football game," scolded his mother anxiously. "There's another matter that men ought to take up. Talk about suffragists! If women had the ballot, our children would n't have their bones ground as in mortar, and their necks and legs and arms broken, to amuse a heartless crowd!"

Morel swallowed hard, then ventured, "I say, Maw—Mother, there'll be a crowd, and all strange boys. They'll poke fun at our town. Let's take down our gate and put the coal-house door back."

"No, my son," said his mother firmly. "The men who live here have no proper regard for law and order. Let them have time to admire the result of their indifference. Why, your father actually laughed when I told him that a butcher's ticket, 'Hogs' Heads a Specialty,' was hanging over the barber's shop!" She addressed her husband: "Think of it! Martin Brothers' sign, 'Ladies' Clothing One-Third Off,' nailed to the theatre, and no arrests! Things shall remain as they are until the night-marauders are captured, punished, and forced to undo their nefarious work." And she gloated in her own eloquence.

"Come, now, mother," Mr. Shandon pleaded, "don't be too severe. After all, the real punishment would fall on the parents in fines. And you must understand the whole thing was meant for a joke."

"Yes," agreed Mrs. Shandon, with a mirthless laugh; "and it is so funny! It would be a shame to curtail a joke like that."

The boys met in solemn conclave. They could hear in advance the jeers of Danville at shiftless people who left chicken-wire hanging on chimneys, and door-bells tied to outdoor tobacco figures! But able-bodied players were needed for the approaching game, therefore no criminal dared confess and thus, by accepting responsibility, mend the matter.

The city council, though sympathetically aware of the boys' mounting nervousness, made no move. Calmly they let the women strive for that which their Solonic wisdom had been unable to attain: the maintenance of order, with the keeping of boydom out of jail.

Miss Treice (coming out of her kitchen door) announced that one of the Danville boys was her cousin, and she meant to give the team a supper. Mrs. Shandon, standing on the porch beside the old chicken-coop, told Morel that he was welcome to bring home some of the visitors, if he cared to.

The Fairview "Coyotes" began to plan surreptitious measures of

relief, but were continually baffled. Tom Adams, called "the Camel" because of a distinguishing lower jaw, had climbed one tree and laid hands on its unusual fruit when stern feminine tones demanded:

"Did you put that gate up there, young man?"

"No'm, I did n't," protested the quarter-back. "I—I just came up to see if the hinges was rusting, ma'm;" and he hurried down.

At midnight Mrs. Shandon intercepted Morel on the front porch, in suspicious proximity to the chicken-coop.

"Where are you going, dear?" he heard her ask.

"Me—oh, me? I was n't going anywhere," he stammered. "I must walk in my sleep."

Like all successful reformers, Mrs. Shandon had no sense of humor; she also was lacking in a knowledge of human nature. She entertained no suspicion of her boy—that a roster of Hallowe'en's "dreadful law-breakers" might include his name had not once occurred to her—but she feared that suspicion might attach to him if he were discovered undoing the mischief of others, and she did not return to her room until Morel had crept dejectedly to his. Though less credulous in regard to her son's innocence, Mrs. Adams was equally bent on keeping him home after dusk.

"Gee, but women'd make awful policemen," groaned Sylvester Smith. "'Pears like they're everywhere at once. They make all the touch-downs in this town. Wish 't there wa'n't no such fool thing as Hallowe'en. Won't them Danville fellows guy us, with the place in this fierce shape! You'd think folks'd have some pride and want their old gates and things back."

"Well, they don't," grunted Tom dolefully. "Looks like we gotter stand for it. Them skates'll rate us with Shantytown, that's what we're up against!"

The taunt nerved their captain to renewed effort. His mother caught him, that night, crawling along the porch roof.

"I dreamed I was going out to see the Little Dipper," was Morel's faltering explanation. "This sleep-walking grows on a fellow."

"You must have indigestion," commented his mother. "I'll nail down your windows. It really is n't safe to leave them open."

The boys despaired, and the game was ominously near.

The night before the struggle for pigskin honors a terrific storm swept the town, the first element let loose in it that was stronger than the Good Order Society. Thunder rolled, lightning cut out vivid scenes like an impressionist artist gleaning genre life-studies for the walls of a salon. Early in the evening the theatre with its borrowed sign was struck and the fire company called out. Wildest excitement prevailed. At last the boys were free from observation. They believed it a special dispensation of Providence.

Figures grotesque in the scurrying rain fought against wind and tumbling awnings, climbed swaying trees, toiled like Inferno laborers, strange burdens on their backs.

Tom Adams was hurled from a tree; Sylvester Smith was blown off a telegraph pole; but Tom came down on a gate—extraordinary air-ship!—and with Sylvester fell a garbage-can and a porch-chair. Honor and victory!

The wagon coming off the shed made many women scream that the thunder was growing worse. The Judge's son headed for the local "dump," loaded with old tomato-cans. Morel Shandon shouldered and carried the offending chicken-coop half a mile, water pouring down his neck from its triangles.

They flinched not for the lightning; the whirlwind fought with them for their grip on shingle roofs and the sides of wet buildings. To thunderous rolling, their feet trod the running streets. When morning came at last, smiling rosily down on a rejuvenated town, Miss Treice's front door would open, and the Shandon porch did not suggest a poulticer's. Fairview in staid and sober guise was ready for Danville. Even Martin Brothers' marked-down sign had been removed by a considerate stroke of lightning. Lawns glistened, each separate grass-blade had met its love and wore a diamond pledge; the streets had that soft, flowing lustre which comes from recent drenching; hedges bristled with rain-drop bayonets. Gates were rehung, flower-beds washed clean of refuse, like young hearts purged of grief by a night's tears. Mrs. Shandon, surprised out of her conventional rectitude, appeared at the front door with her hair in magic curlers. Mrs. Adams was calling across the fence:

"I hope Morel did n't catch a new cold. I saw him out in all that storm."

Mrs. Shandon drew herself up to her full height. "I do not doubt his being there," she asserted boastfully. "My son takes after me, and has an almost fanatical civic pride. Our town's condition was a great humiliation to him. I hope Tom is better. I hear he had a fall last night."

Mrs. Adams wavered, colored, frowned, cast a glance at Mrs. Smith, who, with many expressive upliftings to heaven of hands and eyes, was whispering over the gate to Fielding Scott's sister, and said in altered tone, leaning forward confidentially:

"They say Sylvester Smith is one mass of bruises, from head to heels."

Although there were many similar bruises and many aching muscles in Fairview that day, the new civic pride combined with school spirit proved too much for Danville. The "Coyotes" won, and the city council came out in a body and cheered them lustily.

THE PLATONIC FRIEND

By Gertrude Morrison

LAYING aside his pen, James Wray crossed to the window, threw wide its sash, and leaned out over the city. The misty magic of the raindrops made the familiar outlines of the trees on the campus seem lost in the glory of a nimbus, and lent to the scene the delicacy and the boldness of a Corot. Beyond, the lights of the city blurred.

Bending far out, drinking in the night's appeal, its intimate suggestion of humanity close at hand, of companionship, he murmured:

"O gleaming lamps of London, that gem the city's crown,
What fortunes lie within you, O Lights of London Town?"

He went back to his desk to try his own fortune, to seek that which, possibly, "lay shining in the distance."

Drawing toward him the sheet of paper on which, with pen that lingered as if loath to leave its task, he had traced "My dear Alicia," he continued—

The time has come when I can no longer mask as "Platonic friend." While you needed me sorely for just that, a combination of monitor, big brother, father confessor, child playmate, with now and then a touch of "mothering" tucked in on the side, I was content to be your "old dog Tray." But to do so longer were unfair to you and unworthy of myself.

You came to college a bashful Freshman, shy of girls, afraid of men. You drifted into my classes. And when—with that impressiveness with which we young professors think to clothe ourselves in a dignity beyond our years—when for the first time I called that name since grown so sweetly familiar, there was in your eyes a helplessness that won your way into my heart, where, Love, I fain would keep you.

You thought nothing of it; or, if you did, the youngsters of my fraternity were quick to tell you that "Professor Jim," as they dub me in whimsical affection, always adopted little girls, liked them immensely, but never, no, never, ate them. And so you learned to come to me in simple confidence, guilelessly, laying bare to me your petty griefs, your girlish heart-burnings, your triumphs.

You came, presently, to talk of men. In your Freshman year, when you voted your instructor in Greek "just sweet," I laughed outright. When a Sophomore, Alicia, your whim was the captain

of the football team. A "pretty, witty, Junior"? The leader of the Glee Club twanged under your window—

"Teach me how to love,
Like a turtle-dove."

I, from our house next door, heard, and chuckled under the bed-clothes. Also a "cadaverous cuss" penned you verse, missie, with which you were mightily taken. A Senior—sie upon you, Alicia! How you did scare me when you discovered genius masking in freckles, snub-nose, and ill-fitting clothes—but *that* your sorority sisters soon settled. Am I unkind, Alicia? Sweetheart, I love to tease you; but I'm proud of the little charmer.

One by one your "heroes" stepped from their pedestals. Only just once rumor would have it that at last you cared, that in the love scenes of our college theatricals, in which you shared honors with graceful, careless, ne'er-do-weel Jack Harmen, neither of you was *acting*. But I knew that you were letting Harmen monopolize you only because your tender heart ached for his "fallen and traitor life," and longed to help him find himself. We never talked it over, little girl, but when we of the Faculty escorted Jack to the edge of the campus because once too often he had "gone down the road to the jolly Vendome," and gently but firmly dropped him over, I fancy, little Alicia, that you decided to content yourself, thereafter, with elevating humanity in the abstract. Yet do you know, dear heart, that your budding womanliness never more appealed to me than in your futile struggle over poor Jack? However unworthy the cause that called them forth, I honor the staunchness and the fidelity with which, in the face of all remonstrance, you stood by your friend. It gave some of the rest of us courage to make more of an effort to reclaim such fellows as Jack. You have given me courage to do a great many things, Alicia.

Am I fit? In the big things, yes. I have the respect of my fellow men, and am entitled to it. But in the little nameless kinks of character, insidious in their destructive power— Alicia, don't marry me unless you can truly love me. Can't you love me? Your heart is free. Through everything you have come to me for that counsel which surely you must have preferred from the man you love, had there been such other than myself.

Because you have turned unconsciously to me, I dare to hope that, when you search your heart, you will find in it something more than just "Platonics" for your old dog Tray; a friendship, at least, so tinged with warmth that we may hope to fan it into flame. Believe me, those loves which are rooted in mutual esteem, quickening gradually into a more tender regard, stand best their trial by the years. And so, dear one, good-night.

Suffering the pen to fall from his hand, the young professor again walked to the window and raised the sash. No longer limned, the Corot trees; a Whistler night now, all bluey-gray fog and vapor. Here and there, scattered over the grounds, a reddish flicker signed the night-owl; in the sorority house across the way, where *she* lived, a few white, electric gleams; and far off toward San José a low, lurid orange spot,

moving swiftly. Its uncanny stare, as of a Cyclopean eye, sent a chill of depression over him. It wanted but a voice, and he was in the clutch of the naked hand of that monster of the night. Around him, the sleeping campus, humanity in its presence—yet how remote.

"O mocking lamps of London, what weary eyes look down."

Below, a quick step kicked up the gravel walk, leaped onto the porch. "Fellows!" an excited cry reached him as the door swung to. There was muffled sound of startled exclamations, quick question and reply. Presently one came running, and threw open his door without preliminary knock. "Prof.," said his "frat." brother in a troubled voice, "that little girl of yours next door is off to San José with Jack Harmen in his auto. The girls have just found her note. They'll be married before any one can stop them."

The young professor looked off through the window, instinctively searching out that low, lurid eye, swift-moving, now a mere dot. Out of the night he caught the refrain—

"O cruel lights—of London!"

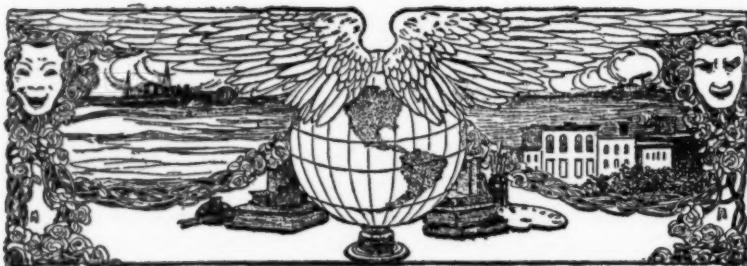


THE ROAD TO CURRASHEEN

BY AGNES I. HANRAHAN

THERE'S a lonesome rugged road,
An' it leads to Currasheen;
Brown bogs lies close along it,
An' there's ne'er a patch av green.
But och the sun kep' smilin',
On the way to Currasheen;
An' ev'ry bog was beamin'
Wid the love av my Paudeen!

Bewhiles when I bees thinkin'
Av yon road to Currasheen,
The Goolden Gates comes nearer;
An' I seems to see Paudeen—
Tho' there's star-ways all through Heav'n
Lightin' smooth wee paths between;
We'll search in troth for lone bogs,
Like what led to Currasheen!



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

THE FETICH OF THE "GIRL"

IN American life, after the tyrant Gold, comes the tyrant Girl. She dominates our society and all our art in its various manifestations. For her and around her our novels are written, our plays produced. Of her our pictures are painted, to her our manners are adjusted.

Hundredfold, month by month, she smiles and smirks upon us from the covers of magazines and books, naughtily, haughtily, proudly, or pleasantly, according to the whim of those artists who have betrayed their talents into slavish and monotonous prostrations at her shrine. Thus pictured types of "girls" are produced and labelled—impossible creatures, dehumanized, unnatural, sexless, and artificial idols—no less monstrous an evidence of superstition than the ikons before which the Russian moujik bows him down. In the face of these unwholesome, bloodless, and false simulacrae of real life and real girlhood, the American moujik casts himself in the dust, for in the heart of him is that willing subservience to the callow feminine, the feebly pretty, the conspicuously dainty, and also many false and pernicious ideas of what he supposes is chivalry. He is unable to see that this exaggerated girl-worship is destructive of the finer, riper, higher ideals of womanhood, that it is essentially an abasement—cruel and exclusive towards womankind as a whole, in that it exalts mere physical prettiness above essential worth of character, and this to a degree unknown in other lands, whatever their standards of beauty may be.

It is an idolatry that is devastating our art and literature, for it has placed in the hands of the immature and weak the right or, at least, the power to set up tyrannical standards to restrict the expression of the sincere artist. By having made her the idol of himself and of herself, the American man has deprived the "girl" of something infinitely more precious than this exaggerated worship of her prettiness, and that is a masculine ideal of true womanhood. He has made her her own ideal. That is fatal to the individual, to the sex, and to the nation. It has already resulted in a decadence and debauchery of the very type it sought to deify—as is apparent in the frightful pictorial excesses and riotous extravagances of certain draughtsmen, whose "girls" have developed into enormous masses of hair and lace, pointed extremities, distorted bodies, and features with huge, ridiculous ox-eyes—doll-like effigies and painted automata appealing to sensuality through the eye.

The contemptuous drooping eyelids, the supercilious lips and tilted noses, of these abortive creatures, which, until their designers foisted them upon us, found no living likeness in all the land, make the punishment that has been doled out to us for our mad adoration of something shallow, soulless, and untrue. The pictured type has now bred and reflected itself in reality; the unhealthy admiration has brought forth the equally unhealthy objects of its fetishism.

Let not the American popular artist delude himself into the belief that he is serving art or truth or interpreting our life, so long as he is painting china dolls or coloring paper images, the while overlooking the beauty, picturesqueness, truth, and significance of a wrinkled old apple-woman nodding beside her fruit, the farmer's daughter milking, or the plainest-featured mother rocking her babe to sleep.

HERMAN SCHEFFAUER

THE CLUBBOY

DURING some years past, the opinion has evidently been gaining ground among educators that the clubboy is not an altogether desirable product of educational surroundings. Clubs and fraternities, it has been anxiously pointed out, menace the democracy of the colleges. The clubboy, so far as the professorial mind has been able to examine him in his club, is not notoriously scholastic. There is a suspicion that his mental stimulus comes from bottles rather than books; that pool and billiards do not provide the rugged kind of exercise best calculated to offset the labors of the class-room; and that the books and the periodicals in his club library are not invariably those that his professors of English would have selected.

The clubboy, in short, is father to the clubman, and therefore, by

implication, father-in-law to the ex-chorus girl. Such, at least, is the connotation that the usages of the modern newspaper have given to the title "clubman," and one can hardly blame the educators for feeling more than a little worried.

But fortunately for the world at large, the clubman of the daily newspaper is an exceptional being. For every one of him, there are thousands of other clubmen of a quite admirable order, so much like any other pleasant, comfortable gentlemen that they never get in the newspapers at all. So, we fancy, it is with the clubboys. To be sure, they don't tend to make the colleges any more democratic. But even without them, the ambitious determination of educators to have larger and larger classes has already made our leading colleges too big to be altogether democratic under any conditions whatever.

RALPH W. BERGENGREN

THE HIFALUTIN' HYPHEN

ALTHOUGH the general tendency is to do away with unnecessary marks of punctuation, the hyphen is still uselessly retained in "to-day," "to-night," and "to-morrow." That the retaining of the hyphen in these words is not only useless but absolutely criminal is easily demonstrated by a bit of simple mathematics.

There are 178,236,592 English-speaking people. The words "to-day," "to-night," and "to-morrow" are together used forty-eight times daily by every person—five of these being written out in long-hand. Thus the daily output of hyphens in these words totals 891,182,460. Taking the average length of a written hyphen to be one quarter of an inch, you have a straight line 3,864 miles long. At the usual rate of writing, it would take one man seventy-six years to insert the hyphens in these words, and his salary would amount to \$78,436.

But, avoiding all theory, "to-day," "to-night," and "to-morrow" are daily hyphenated four times each on 234,192 typewriters, and three times daily on 184,216 linotype machines. Remembering that a pressure of one ounce is required to strike a typewriter key, and two and one-half ounces to depress a linotype, we see that in writing these hyphens a total of 352,974 foot-pounds of energy is expended, or enough to draw a passenger train across the United States.

To avoid appearing picayunish, no mention has been made of the waste of ink and paper, but this would approximate in value the daily bread supply of the State of New York.

The hyphens in "to-day," "to-night," and "to-morrow" should be discontinued today.

JOHN E. ROSSER

WALNUTS AND WINE



THE MISSING LINK

"The chief argument against the ape theory," observed little Binks, "is that I cannot imagine a process of evolution in which so useful a member as the tail would unquestionably be to a man could be eliminated from the list of his possessions. Take our modern life, for instance, and see what a boon that tail would be to us all if we still possessed it. On the overcrowded public vehicles of transportation we could swing by it from the straps, holding our bundles in our hands. In the hurry of a rush for a departing train, we could use it to tow our suit-case along, while we were fumbling in our pockets for our tickets. At five o'clock teas it would enable us to hold our cup in one hand, a spoon in the other, and a piece of cake in its prehensile clutch. At the theatre it could act as the guardian of our fur overcoat, by the simple act of coiling it around the folded garment, so that the man behind could not get away with it in the dark without being detected. For the suburbanite who shows his devotion to his wife by transforming himself into an express-company for the delivery of her packages, it would be a boon of inestimable value, and for a lover whose best girl is too timid to drive a horse it could be used to hold the reins during a moonlight sleigh-ride, leaving the arms free for the psychological moment."

"All of which is very interesting," returned the Genial Philosopher, "but there is another side to the proposition. What of the condition of that suburbanite whose wife wishes him to remain home at night, and while he is indulging in an after-dinner nap prior to departing for the Lodge, ties his tail in a double bow-knot to the rear leg of his morris chair, so that by no possible means can he hope to get it untied without her assistance? What about the danger to the eyes from the man who never learned how to handle his tail any more than some women know how to carry an

Walnuts and Wine

umbrella, sticking it out behind them as they mount the elevated or other stairs, so that the ferule pokes into the optics of the person coming along behind? Suppose you were able, as you say, to dangle from the strap by mean of a tail, how about other people in the car over whose hats, shoulders, and laps your undulant pedal extremities went swaying to and fro, and upon whose noses as the trains swept around the curves your knees implanted an innocent but none the less laborious jab? What of the bills over-worked man would have to pay for the embellishment of such an appendage to the ladies of the family. No woman would wear such a thing twenty-four hours without putting an aigrette on the end of it, or strewing a series of diamond rings along its sinuous length. Fashion would scientifically treat of its decoration, with the result that at the very least it would have to be provided with a long kid glove constructed on the lines of an umbrella cover, the which could hardly escape proving an expensive matter. As for your proposed use for it at the theatre, you would soon get tired of that after it had been stepped on a half-dozen times by fat people in the row behind going out between the acts, not to mention the irritating attrition to which it would be subjected by the wiggling toe of the lady in the seat immediately behind you. In the household it would add a new terror to parents in that it would inspire the children with an irresistible desire to swing from the chandeliers, and dangle on the wall from the picture-mouldings, to say nothing of their efforts to play trolley with the telegraph wires out in front. And worst of all, on our overcrowded vehicles of public transportation, where you seem to think it would be so very useful, what do you think would be the emotions of that last man on the rear platform of a subway car during the rush-hours, straining and struggling for a foot-hold, when the guard slammed to the doors, catching the end of the tail therein?"

"*Ow-wow! Don't!*" cried Little Binks, shuddering. "The mere idea of it hurts!"

"You bet it does," grinned the Genial Philosopher. "But it don't hurt half as much as it would if it were more than a mere idea. No, sir; the loss of a tail was a blessing, not a misfortune. I think the destiny that shaped our ends in that respect was a qualified expert in the designing of terminal facilities. If you'll order me a horse's neck, I'll join you in a toast to Destiny for starting that ancient simian hook-worm off on an independent career."

"Done!" said Little Binks. "That subway door notion of yours has completely converted me, and I shall wag my way through life hereafter with no more envious dreams of former glories left hopelessly behind."

John Kendrick Bangs

THE FABLE OF THE RAVEN LUNATIC

There was once a Raven who was of a Blithe and Cheery Disposition, and who was generally liked by his Feathered Friends. One day he was flying across country when he stopped to rest on a tree by a Village School. Being a Curious Bird, he peered in the window to see what was going on.

Now, it happened that just at that time the Schoolmaster was reading aloud, with Perfervid Eloquence, Edgar Allan Poe's masterpiece, "The Raven." Listening, the Real Bird foolishly conceived himself to be the Original of the one immortalized in the Poem. After that he became Morose and Melancholy, and much given to saying, "Nevermore!" Not satisfied with this, he finally entered a Residence occupied by Human Persons, and tried perching above a Chamber Door; whereupon they captured him and put him in a Cage.

On sunny days his Barred Prison was hung outdoors, and sometimes his Old Associates would come around and try to console him. All were greeted with a doleful shake of the head and the word "Nevermore" uttered in Sepulchral Tones. They soon concluded that he had lost his mind, and left him to his Fate. After that, he became known, wherever Birds congregated, as the original Raven Lunatic.

The moral of this Fable might be expressed as follows:

This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, or so I have heard,
Thou canst not then be false to any bird!

Clifton B. Dowd

AT ITALIAN OPERA

By Edith R. Mirrieles

Laughter and tears from no occasion rise;
Watch well your neighbor, crying when she cries!

QUITE DIFFERENT

"So you were gagged and bound by bandits? Quite like comic opera."

"No, indeed; there was nothing of the comic opera about them. The gags they used were new."

Isaline Normand

Walnuts and Wine

SIX LITTLE SUFFRAGETTES

By Harold Susman

Six little Suffragettes—
Mercy sakes alive!
One of them saw a joke,
Then there were five!

Five little Suffragettes,
Loyal to the core;
One found a bargain-sale,
Then there were four!

Four little Suffragettes,
Earnest as could be;
One took another's cook,
Then there were three!

Three little Suffragettes—
Don't know what to do;
One of them lost her head,
Then there were two!

Two little Suffragettes
All the others shun;
One of them lost her heart,—
Then there was one!

One little Suffragette
(Pretty nearly done)—
She saw a little mouse,—
Then there were none!



AT THE WRONG DOOR

"My health and digestion are perfect, Doctor," began the caller in the office of the medical man. "I have n't an ache or a pain. The trouble with me is that I cannot sleep at night."

"Well, if that is the case, sir," said the learned physician, "I suggest that you consult your spiritual adviser rather than me."

R. M. Winans

Walnuts and Wine

Too Wise to be Caught

The Superintendent of the Public Schools of one of our large cities once had a discussion with another educator over a phenomenon which he had observed among the smaller children. The superintendent claimed that children would know a number when they heard it, and yet if you were to write the component parts of the number before them, they would not notice if the parts were reversed.

The other gentleman seemed a little skeptical, and accordingly they arranged to visit a school in a section of the city where there were a number of Jewish children. Arrived in the class-room, the superintendent began his demonstration.

"Children, give me a number," he said.

"Thirteen," was a ready reply.

However, instead of writing thirteen, the superintendent reversed the numbers and wrote thirty-one.

"Now, children, what number have I written?"

"Thirteen," was the ready reply.

Again he tried it with other numbers suggested by the children, and still they persisted in their error.

Finally a little Jewish boy raised his hand and, being recognized, said, "Say, smarty, try forty-four, and see if you can monkey with that."

John S. Hunter

HORSE SENSE

In Montpelier, Vermont, they tell of a Yankee who owned a fine horse, which, however, suffered from periodical fits of dizziness. To a friend whom the owner consulted as an expert in "hosses," the question was put as to what should be done with the beast.

After a careful and extended examination, the Vermont expert shifted his quid from one side to the other of his mouth, and delivered himself in this wise:

"Wa-al, Richard, I have reached the conclusion that the best thing you kin do with this hoss is to take him out some time when he ain't dizzy an' sell him to a stranger!"

Edwin Tarrisse

PUZZLED

"Well," said old Ben Williams, "I've taken a powder for my headache, a pellet for my liver, and a capsule for my gouty foot. Now, what puzzles me is, how do the things know the right place to go after they get inside?"

William C. Bennett

Walnuts and Wine

PLAIN ENGLISH

By the extraordinary contortions of her neck, he concluded she was trying to get a glimpse of the back of her new blouse; by the tense line and scintillating flash about her lips, he concluded that her mouth was full of pins.

"Umph—goof—suff-wuff—she—sh—ffspog?" she asked.

"Quite so, my dear," he agreed. "It looks very nice."

"Ouff—wuff—so—gs—ph—rf—ugh—ight?" was her next remark.

"Perhaps it would look better if you did that," he nodded, "but it fits very nicely as it is."

She gasped and emptied the pins into her hands.

"I've asked you twice to raise the blinds, so that I can get more light, James!" she exclaimed. "Can't you understand plain English?"

Joe King



HIS PLAN

By Clara O'Neill

To dodge his creditors required
Such vigilance and vim,
A motor car he went and hired,
And now they're dodging him!



THE LAST STRAW

Growler: "That new son-in-law of mine is an impudent fellow."

Fowler: "Why so?"

Growler: "Did n't you hear him declare he was living on little or nothing?"

Fowler: "But why complain about that?"

Growler: "Well—he is living on me."

William Griffith



A LITERAL TRANSLATION

"What is a bigot, pa?"

"A man who is absolutely certain of something he knows nothing about."

Guy Fledgby



THE VITAL PART

Manager: "We need extra men to take part in the banquet scene."

Hungry Walker: "Do you serve real food?"

J. J. O'Connell

Walnuts and Wine

A Soft and Delicate Complexion

The skin surface is always in process of renewal, and it is this fact that renders it possible, by proper care, to keep it soft and beautiful.

If the renewing skin be disturbed or retarded in its transmutation by the use of common toilet soaps containing harmful ingredients, or if cosmetics or other artificial agents be resorted to, the skin is sure to lose its natural lustre. By the daily use of



Pears' Soap

a soft and delicate complexion is secured — a complexion that renews its pink and white bloom imperceptibly from year to year, always looking fresh and refined.

Pears, by its exquisite emollient qualities, assists nature in its beautifying work, and is unequalled in its hygienic effect, because it is all pure beauty soap.

To obtain and preserve beauty of complexion use Pears, which is balm, comfort and health to the skin.

OF ALL SCENTED SOAPS PEAR'S OTTO OF ROSE IS THE BEST.
"All rights secured"

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

THE TYPICAL TOPICAL SONG

By La Touche Hancock

In the midst of the craze for these musical plays
Which hold such remarkable sway,
When an item like plot does n't matter a jot,
And art has a very small "a,"
At times it will hap that the usual snap
Is lacking, and something goes wrong;
Still, you can reply it will "go" by and bye
With a typical topical song!

Here 's a subject, or two, that often will do,
If sung with a confident nous—
The high price of meat the people will greet
With shouts that will bring down the house!
If the tariff you chaff, 't will elicit a laugh,
And the subway 's especially strong,
And a touch on divorce can't be missing, of course,
From the typical topical song!

Then the suffragette cause will win great applause,
The comet will prove a big draw,
Joy riding, a strike, chauffeurs, and the like,
They 'll all of them bring a guffaw!
It won't matter a bit, if the play 's not a hit;
You 'll find that the public will throng
To the musical piece, which will take a new lease
With this typical topical song!

↓ A SLY SUGGESTION

They had reached the outer portals of the front door, and were there going through the process of parting, very lingeringly.

"When I say good-night to you this evening," gurgled Mr. Youngslow, "do you think it would proper for me to place one reverent kiss upon your fair hand?"

"Well," she sighed softly, as she laid her head quietly on his shoulder, "I should consider it decidedly out of place."

R. M. Winans

An optimist is a man who never stops to open a sandwich.

Hugh Morist

Walnuts and Wine

NABISCO.

Sugar Wafers

The success of any dessert is doubly assured if served with dainty NABISCO SUGAR WAFERS. A flavor to accord with any beverage, fruit or ice.

In ten cent tins.

Also in twenty-five cent tins.

CHOCOLATE TOKENS—another unique dessert confection. Nabisco goodness enclosed in a shell of rich chocolate.

NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY



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Walnuts and Wine

PERFECTLY WELCOME

Night was approaching, and the rain was coming down faster and faster. The traveller dismounted from his horse and rapped at the door of the one farm-house he had struck in a five-mile stretch of travelling. No one came to the door. As he stood on the doorstep the water from the eaves trickled down his collar. He rapped again. Still no answer. He could feel the stream of water coursing down his back. Another spell of pounding, and finally the red head of a lad of twelve was stuck out of the second story.

"Watcher want?" it asked.

"I want to know if I can stay here overnight," the traveller answered testily.

The red-headed lad watched the man for a minute or two before answering.

"Ye kin fer all of me," he finally answered, and then closed the window.

R. O. Eastman

•

OVERHEARD ON THE STAIRS

A Washington man inadvertently overheard some tender exchanges between a recently betrothed couple who, it chanced, attended some social function at the national capital to which the aforesaid Washingtonian was also asked.

It was on the stairs that the happy pair chose to talk the matter over, and it was from the recesses of an alcove, whither he had gone to get his coat, that the Washingtonian proved to be the accidental recipient of the couple's confidence.

"Just think, dear heart!" exclaimed the young woman. "You proposed to me but twenty-four hours ago!"

"Yes, sweetheart," came in thrilling tones, from the fortunate man, "and it seems as though it were but yesterday!"

Howard Morse

•

THE RUDE BARBER

A farmer from Minnesota entered a barber shop at Butte for the purpose of getting his hair cut. The rural one's locks had an odd, ragged look, and, after regarding them scornfully for a moment, the barber demanded brusquely:

"Say, who cut your hair the last time?"

"My wife," said the farmer, with an uneasy smile.

"She did, eh?" said the barber. "What did she do it with—a knife and fork?"

T.

Walnuts and Wine

A United Nation



Millions of people touch elbows and are kept in constant personal contact by the Bell System.

There are all kinds of people, but only one kind of telephone service that brings them all together. They have varying needs, an infinite variety, but the same Bell system and the same Bell telephone fits them all.

Each Bell Station, no matter where located, is virtually the center of the system, readily connected with other stations, whether one or a thousand miles away.

Only by such a universal system can a nation be bound together.

**AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES**

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Walnuts and Wine

MAYBE HE WAS

In a certain community a profound difference of opinion arose among the members of the church over some not very important question. At a church meeting called in the hope of settling some much discussed question one of the brethren arose to retort to some real or fancied aspersion with the following splendid effort:

"I ain't a-sayin' as how I'm any better than anybody else, but I am a-sayin' as how I'm just as good as some of them as says I ain't, and *maybe better*."

Josefa Thrall

A DESPERATE CASE

A Western physician received the following from a brother physician:

Dear Dock I have a pashunt whose physcial sines showes that the windpipe has ulcerated off and his lungs have dropped into his stumick I have given hym everry think without effeckt his father is welthy hon able and inflooenshial as he is a member of assembly and god nose I dont want to loss hym what shall I do ans by return male. Yours frat,

*Doc TISHBEIN
H. E. Zimmerman*

VERY LAZY

By Joe King

A lazy young fellow named Free
Once started to chop down a tree.
On the third or fourth stroke
The axe-handle broke,
"Who said I'm not lucky?" asked he.

AWFUL!

"Those blinds look pretty old."
"Yes, they are the shades of my departed ancestors."

Flinders Snape

THE OLD LOVE

Cigar: "Why do you look so lovingly at that old match on the floor?"

Cigarette: "It was an old flame of mine."

Marie Lillerton

THE CAUSE

"I hear his relations with his wife are strained. What caused it?"

"Her relations."

Graham Charteris

Walnuts and Wine

When you
"Feel like
Flying"

from the load
housework



Be Calm ~
and use

SAPOLIO

**WORKS
WITHOUT
WASTE**

**CLEANS
SCOURS
POLISHES**

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

A NATURAL DEATH

A friend dropped in on an old lady who was frying a bit of bacon.

"Grand bacon, that," said the friend, sniffing affably.

"Grand bacon? Well, I guess it is grand bacon," said the old lady, turning the slices in the pan. "An' it's none o' yer murdered stuff, nuther. That pig died a natural death."

Hugh Morist



WELL, HARDLY

"Yes," said the Kentuckian, who had just returned from the far West; "Indians are powerful fond of whiskey. Why, suh, let 'em once get a taste of whiskey, an' they'll give up everything for it. An old chief out in Wyoming offered me a pony, saddle, bridle, blankets, an' I think he'd have thrown in his squaw if I'd 'a' let him, in an offer for a pint of whiskey I had with me."

"And you would n't give it to him?" said the astounded auditor.

"Not on your life, son! That was the last pint I had left."

R. M. Winans



A CHARITABLE VIEW

There's more than one sort of charity in New England, as was evidenced in the conversation between the neighbors of a Massachusetts spinster, when news reached them of that lady's intention to visit the West.

"Well," said one of the neighbors, "I do think that for Mary Foster to be starting for the West on a pleasure trip when she is nearly sixty-five years of age, is scand'lous. It's scand'lous, that's what it is!"

"It does look so," admitted the other neighbor, with apparent reluctance, "but it sounds kinder harsh to call poor Mary's actions scand'lous. Let's be charitable and say she's losing her faculties."

Howard Morse



NO NEED FOR ALARM

"She asked me what I thought of you."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, but don't be frightened. I did n't tell her."

Winifred Winn



LATEST BASEBALL FAKE

"Well, my boy, what's the matter?"

"Please, sir, I'd like to go to my grandmother's funeral this afternoon, if it does n't rain."

Dulcimer Dawson

Imitations

The most regrettable feature about the many imitations of Old Hampshire Bond is that the firms who buy them are unconscious imitators themselves of the firms who use the real

Old Hampshire Bond

The "feel" and "crackle" of Old Hampshire Bond are unmistakable to the man who has used it once, while the water-mark will identify it to the neophyte.

Let us send you the Old Hampshire Bond Book of Specimens. It contains suggestive specimens of letterheads and other business forms, printed, lithographed and engraved on the white and fourteen colors of Old Hampshire Bond. Write for it on your present letterhead.

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Jack afloat or ashore is neatly shaved; it's part of the U. S. Navy regulations.

Thousands of Gillettes are used in the Navy. On a modern battleship the men shave wherever they happen to be. You will see one man using the Gillette while another holds the glass for him.

It is shaving reduced to its simplest form—and best. The sailor-man can shave in two minutes and in the roughest weather, with the ship rolling at all angles and with seas washing over the decks.

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King Gillette

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Factories: Boston, Montreal, Leicester, Berlin, Paris

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Walnuts and Wine

THE VARIATIONS OF LOVE

Into a telegraph office in an Eastern town there recently came a much agitated young woman. She wrote upon one telegraph blank, tore it in halves, wrote a second, which she treated in the same manner, and at last a third. This she handed to the operator, requesting, in a trembling voice, that he "hurry it up."

The operator obeyed instructions, and when the young woman had gone he read the two messages that she had torn in halves.

The first was:

All is over. I never wish to see you again.

The second read:

Do not write or try to see me at present.

And the third ran:

Can you take the next train? Please answer.

Taylor Edwards

AN ANXIOUS TIME

Mr. Broughton, the English artist, while sketching in the Alps, was one day in search of a suitable background of dark pines for a picture he had planned. He found at last the precise situation he was seeking, and, best of all, there happened to be a pretty detail in the figure of an old woman in the foreground.

"I asked the old lady," said Mr. Broughton, "to remain seated until I had made a sketch of her. She assented, but in a few minutes asked me how long I should be. 'Only a quarter of an hour,' I answered reassuringly.

"Three minutes or so later, she again asked me—this time with manifest anxiety—if I should be much longer.

"'Oh, not long,' I answered. 'But why do you ask so anxiously?'

"'Oh, it's nothing,' she sadly answered, 'only I'm sitting on an ant-hill.'"

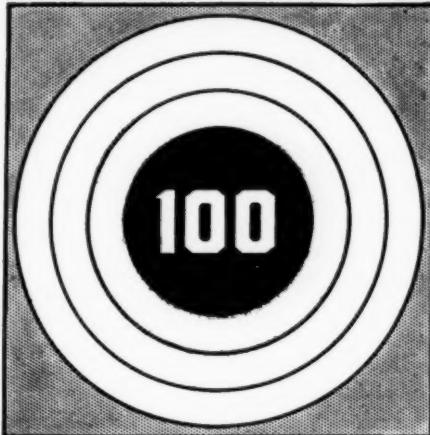
M. L. H.

FOLLOWED INSTRUCTIONS

She was a woman of very puritanical notions, and when she came into his room to kiss her little boy good-night and found that he had not said his prayers, she was very much shocked. "How was it, Willie," she asked, "that you neglected such an important duty?"

"You see, Mamma," he replied, "when Dad sent me in a hurry to bed he said there must n't be another word out of me to-night."

J. J. O'Connell



Hitting the Bull's Eye

BUYING fire insurance ought to be like rifle practice. The aim should be for the **Hartford**. The value of a fire insurance policy is not altogether dependent upon the promises which it contains, nor upon the financial resources back of it. Its value depends largely upon the character and methods of the company which issues it. It is for this reason that we place the **Hartford** as the bull's eye of the insurance target.

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Aiming for the **Hartford** and getting it gives you the perfect score. It costs no more in effort to aim for this perfect insurance: it costs no more in money to get a **Hartford** policy.

Our aim in this advertising is to get property owners to use the same foresight about fire insurance that they do about other business matters. We will register a high score if we succeed.

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Walnuts and Wine

NOT SO DIFFERENT

When the Swedish folk mean "I love" they say "*Jag alskat.*"
Now somebody is asking what relation has jag to love?

K. von K.



THE PINNACLE OF BLISS

By Mazie V. Caruthers

The very happiest moment in my life,
I must confess,
Was not when she who has become my wife
Said "Yes"!
Neither did it occur at our first kiss,
Although that seemed the acme of all bliss!
'T was when I hied me to my dentist's, where
I thought to spend
Some painful hours in his fiendish chair,
My nerves to rend,—
And list! He prodded every tooth at will,
But—found not any cavities to fill!



HER WEEKLY ALLOWANCE

Freda: "So you have a weekly allowance from your father?"

Hilda: "Yes; he allows me to have a gentleman caller two nights a week."

C. C. Mullin



OVERHEARD ON THE TROLLEY

"Say, Mayme, did you ever have any turtle soup?" asked a rawboned youth of the girl beside him.

"No," admitted the maiden; "but," added she, with the conscious dignity of one who has not been lacking in social experience, "I've been where it was."

Josefa Thrall



UNEXPECTEDLY FRANK

Maybelle: "I suppose if a pretty girl came along, you'd forget little me, and straightway fall in love with her."

Percy: "Nonsense, dearest. You know I never did care a rap for good looks."

W. Carey Wonderly



WITH DUE CARE

Dignity is a very proper sort of thing, but don't put on too much of it, or you may be taken for the butler.

Graham Charteris

Walnuts and Wine

They Can't Wear Brassy

There is a great difference between Fast Color Eyelets and all other kinds of shoe eyelets.



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Walnuts and Wine

"SEEING IS BELIEVING."

At a certain college it was the custom to have the students write the following pledge at the bottom of their examination papers:

I hereby certify on my honor that I have neither given nor received aid during this examination.

Soon after handing in his paper to a professor, noted for his sarcasm, a young fellow hurriedly entered the class-room and said: "Professor, I forgot to put the pledge on my paper."

"Altogether unnecessary," replied the teacher. "I have just finished looking over your paper, and I feel sure you did not give nor receive aid."

R. B. Davis

THE SAVING CLAUSE

"My bank has failed."

"Thank goodness, you have your check-book at home!"

Marie Tillerton

ESPECIALLY THE LATTER

"Why, I did n't know you could ride."

"Oh, I 've been practising the last two months on—and off."

Flinders Snape

RUDE, BUT APROPOS

"Give me something for my head."

"I would n't have it as a gift."

Dulcimer Dawson

WHY THE BOY GAVE THANKS

Alan had played the entire day with Little Brother without an impatient word. After saying his customary prayer that night, his mother suggested that he add: "I thank God I was not impatient with Little Brother to-day." This he did with much fervency; after which he remarked that there were some other things he would like to thank God for, and forthwith he closed his eyes and said:

"I thank God I offered my candy to Father before taking any myself.

"I thank God I offered my candy to Mother before taking any myself.

"I thank God I offered my candy to Little Brother before taking any myself.

"And I thank God there was some left."

C. H.

Walnuts and Wine

IF you don't get anything more out of your college life than just the knowledge you receive from books, you'll be well paid for all the time and money it costs you.

But that's the smallest part. The big thing is the mental training; power to think, to concentrate. Your brains are just like your muscles. They need exercise; must have it. Give them exercise and they will do for you whatever you will. On the other hand, if you neglect or fail to use them they become atrophied, dead.

Put your perfectly well arm in splints or a plaster cast and leave it a comparatively short time—you lose the use of it. Same with your brains. Use: life. Disuse: death. You can't afford to be without a well trained mind—not in this day and age. You're going to deal with men who have trained minds or you're not—depends on what kind of a mind you've got, trained or untrained.

Put your brains into training. Our home study courses offer over two hundred subjects. It will be strange if from this number you can't select a course of study that will do for your brains just what is required to help you realize your ambition.

If you'll tell us exactly what you wish to do we'll assist in selecting a course of study that will help you do it.

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Walnuts and Wine

A MODERN OMAR

By Horace Dodd Gastit

CONTENTMENT

To be contented is indeed most sweet,
Whatever Fortune strews before your feet.
I 'd be contented with my lot, I 'm sure,
If it were placed somewhere on Easy Street.

HAPPINESS

A jug, a vine, and thou! How mighty snug
We 'd be, dear heart, like insects in a rug!
A hammock swung for me beneath the vine,
And thou always on hand to pass the jug!

PATIENCE

I do not chide my neighbor, no, not I,
If he offend me with some action sly.
I merely sit, and silent bide the time
When I can catch and punch him on the eye!

AMBITION

I do not ask for much—a nice soft bed;
A softer job, and when perchance I 'm fed
A little more than I can hold, and then
The daughter of some billionaire to wed.

LOVE

A store of love within my spirit purls,
So great that when up through my heart it whirls
I find there is enough on hand for me
To lavish on at least ten-thousand girls.

FRIENDSHIP

Give me for friend a man with spirits gay,
Who labels all I do with his "O. K."
With cash to lend whatever be my need,
And ne'er a thought that I shall ever pay.

*

THE CALL OF THE OCEAN

"O, si sic omnes."

L. T. H.

Walnuts and Wine

White Rock

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SUE.—"I'm sorry, but I can't help you out on those problems. The lessons have changed so since my schooldays."

THE BOYS.—"Darn it! I wish we had an encyclopedia."

SUE.—(Aside) "Hello! That's a suggestion for John's birthday present. It will come in handy for the boys."

THE CAR.—"It'll be worse than that for his nibs! He'll get in it with both feet!"

where are the capitals?

They are before you—under your fingers ready to imprint themselves on the paper at a single stroke if the typewriter is a

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writes "Apr. 10, 1906," by shifting once,
writes eighty letters to the line,
takes paper 10½ inches wide,
has the new and better paper feed,
has a ball-bearing carriage,
has regularly four margin stops,
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"JOHN THOROUGH THAT WHILE HE WAS 'ON THE JOB' HE'D MAKE PLENTY OF IT,"—Continued.



JOHN.—"Gee whiz, Sue! The very thing I wanted—an encyclopaedia! I'll just cart that up to my den and look up wine. It'll help me out in some experiments I'm contemplating."

SUE.—"Huh! I thought it would keep you out of mischief."

THE CAT.—"I can see a cloud looming up on the horizon!"

IT COSTS NO MORE TO SMOKE GOOD CIGARS

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The price of a cigar over the retail-store counter averages nearly double the factory price. We sell our entire product directly to the smoker at real factory prices. To-day over 68,000 business and professional men buy all of their cigars from us. Many desire to reduce their cigar bills, but the majority of these satisfied customers prefer to pay the same amount and obtain a better—very much better—grade of tobacco, workmanship and uniformity.

The secret of having retained their patronage is that before deciding to keep our cigars you always have the privilege of trying five or six from each box entirely at our expense. Every box is a sample box, therefore we are always on our mettle to keep up the standard of *quality and uniformity*.

Take our "Magneto" and point for point you will find it infinitely better than the best cigar sold in a retail store for 10c. It is a mild, delicious, fragrant and satisfying perfecto, made by hand, with a genuine, imported Sumatra wrapper, and *long, nutty, rich* Havana filler. It's the kind of a cigar that makes you never want to be without more of the same blend.

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Let us send you from our factory Humidors 100 perfectly conditioned Magnets, delivery prepaid, subject to your approval. Smoke five or six and if they suit your taste, if you are entirely pleased with them, send us \$5.00 within 10 days: or return the remainder, expressage collect, and there will be no charge for the few cigars smoked.

Wouldn't it be folly for us to go on making this public claim of superior quality of the "Magneto" and economy to you—unless our cigars would stand the test?

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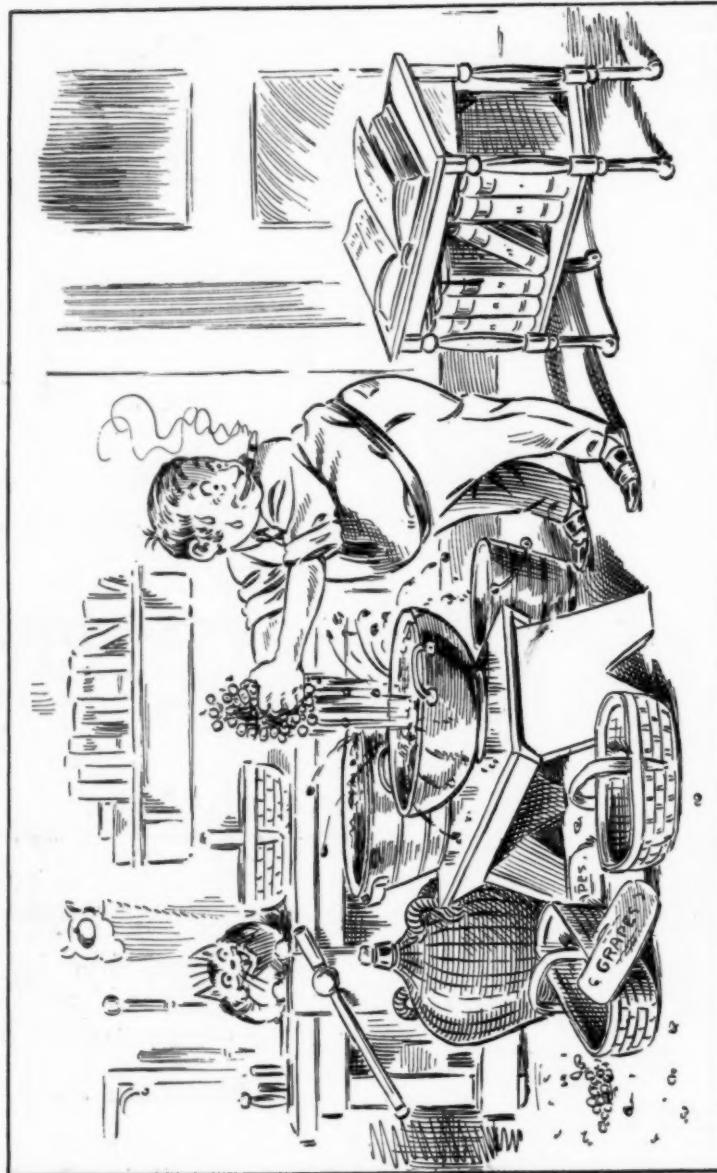
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"JOHN THOUGHT THAT WHILE HE WAS 'ON THE JOB' HE'D MAKE PLENTY OF IT,"—Continued.



JOHN.—"Yes! I'm right! It says, 'After the pommes rise to surface remove same, pour juice into demijohn, add three pounds of sugar to each quart of liquor. As wine ferments add water each day to keep vessel filled, do not cork until fermentation is completed, then rack off into small bottles.' Gee! I'm glad I made plenty of it! It'll last me for years."

THE CAT.—"From present indications he'll have enough to last him a lifetime."

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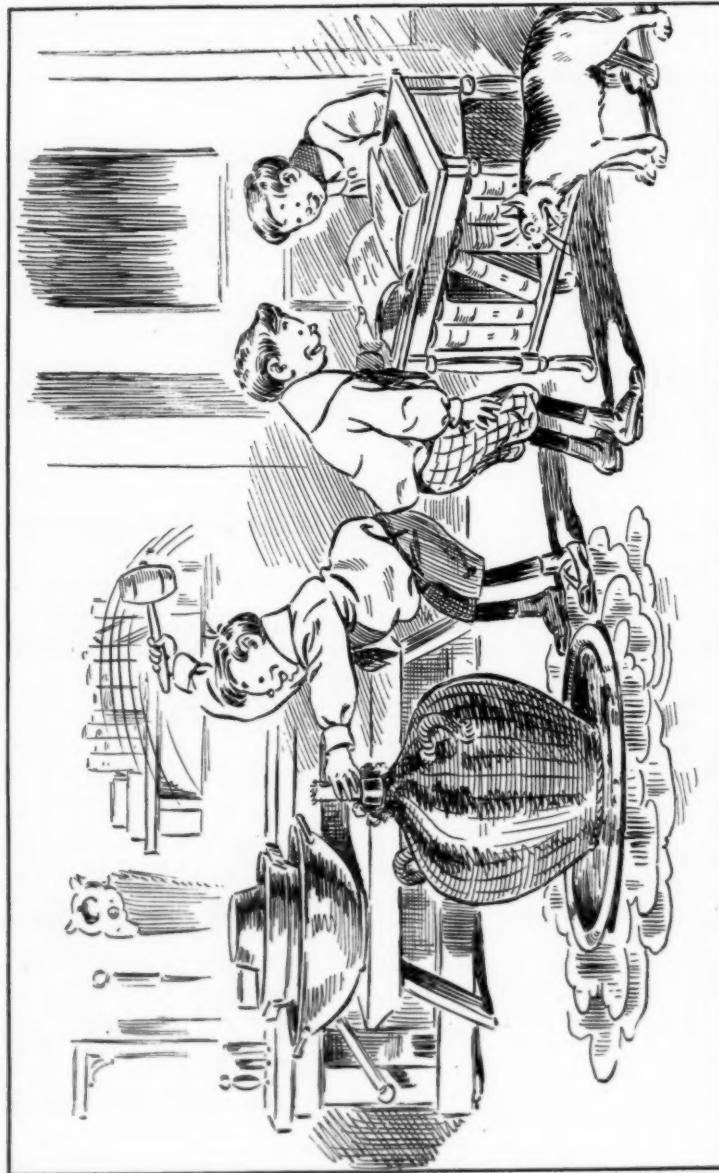
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"JOHN THOUGHT THAT WHILE HE WAS 'ON THE JOB' HE'D MAKE PLENTY OF IT,"—Continued.



THE FIRST-BORN.—"Here she is, fellows! It's wine he's making!"

SECOND-BORN.—"Gosh! He's forgot to cork this demijohn up and it's leaken all over the floor. I'll drive this plug in it to stop it."

THE CAT.—"Guess I'd better beat it! This is no place for a cat."

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—Bang!

SUE.—"Good gracious, John ! What's that ?"

JOHN.—"Heavens ! Something's up !"

THE BOYS.—"O-o-o-oh ! pop ! Something's the matter upstairs !"

THE CAT.—"It looks like a 'black hand' stunt."

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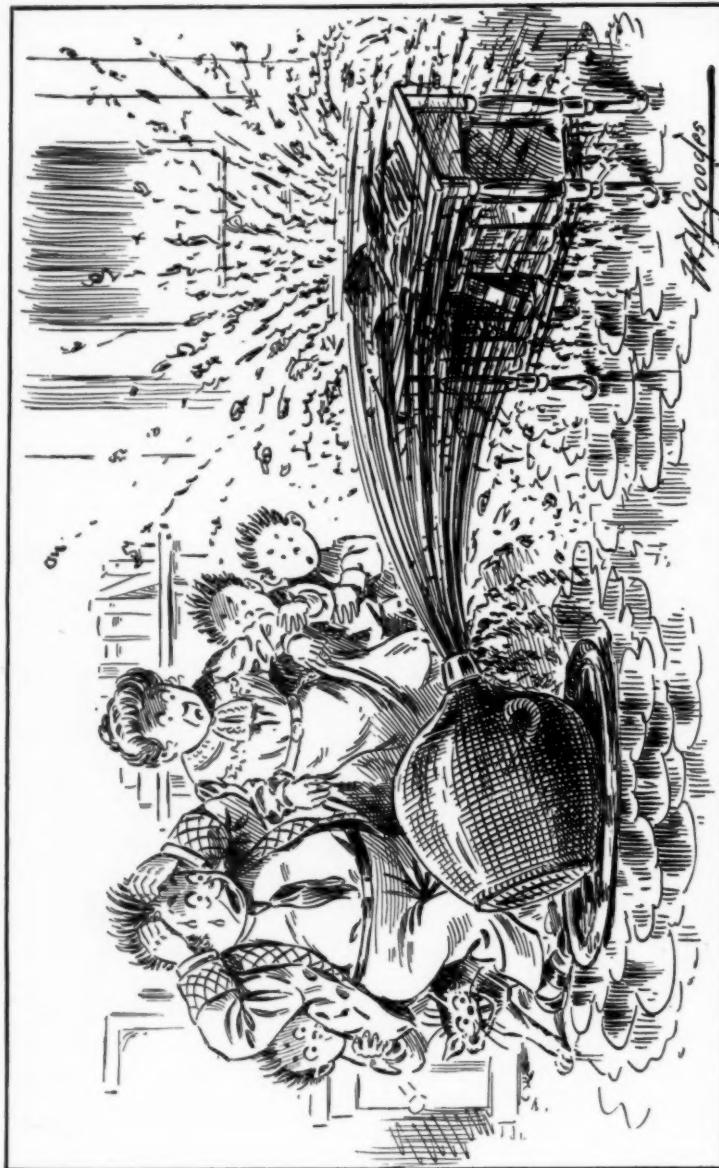
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JOHN.—"The dyker with the bloomen carpet! Look at my poor books!"

THE CAT.—"There's many a slip twixt the cup and the lip' popper! He! he!"

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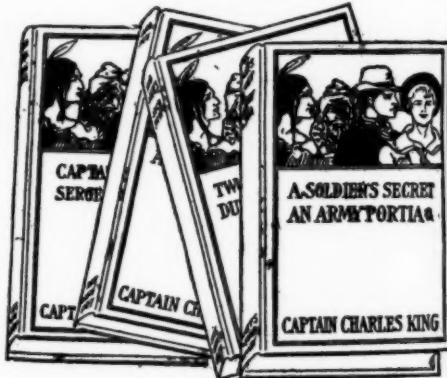
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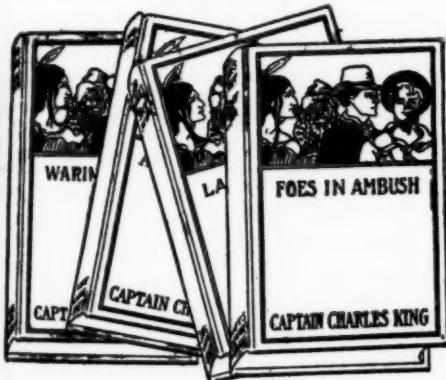
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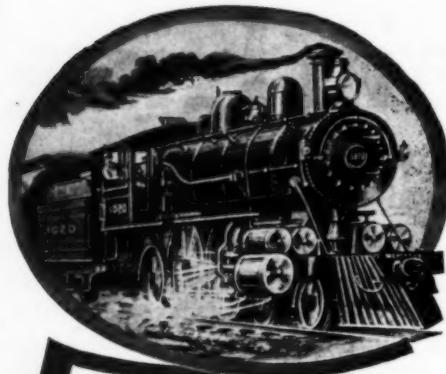
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Edith Macvane

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THE NEW YEAR

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WAYS OF THE HOUR

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Nevil M. Hopkins

WALNUTS AND WINE

All the contributions are signed and paid for, and virtually all the better-known humorous writers are represented in it from time to time. The department is very widely quoted from.

Florence Earle Coates
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Witter Bynner
M. I. McNeal-Sweeney
Charles Hanson Towne
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Frank D. Sherman
Clinton Scollard
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Ethel Colson
Mahlon Leonard Fisher
Charlotte Wilson
Arthur B. Rhinow
Charlton L. Edholm
Mary Coles Carrington
"John Carter"

are some of the poets whose best work will appear in *Lippincott's Magazine* during the coming year. There will also be brief sketches, both humorous and serious, and clever epigrams, by

Thomas L. Masson Ellis O. Jones Bolton Hall
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and others. Not the least pleasurable features of *Lippincott's* will be the



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